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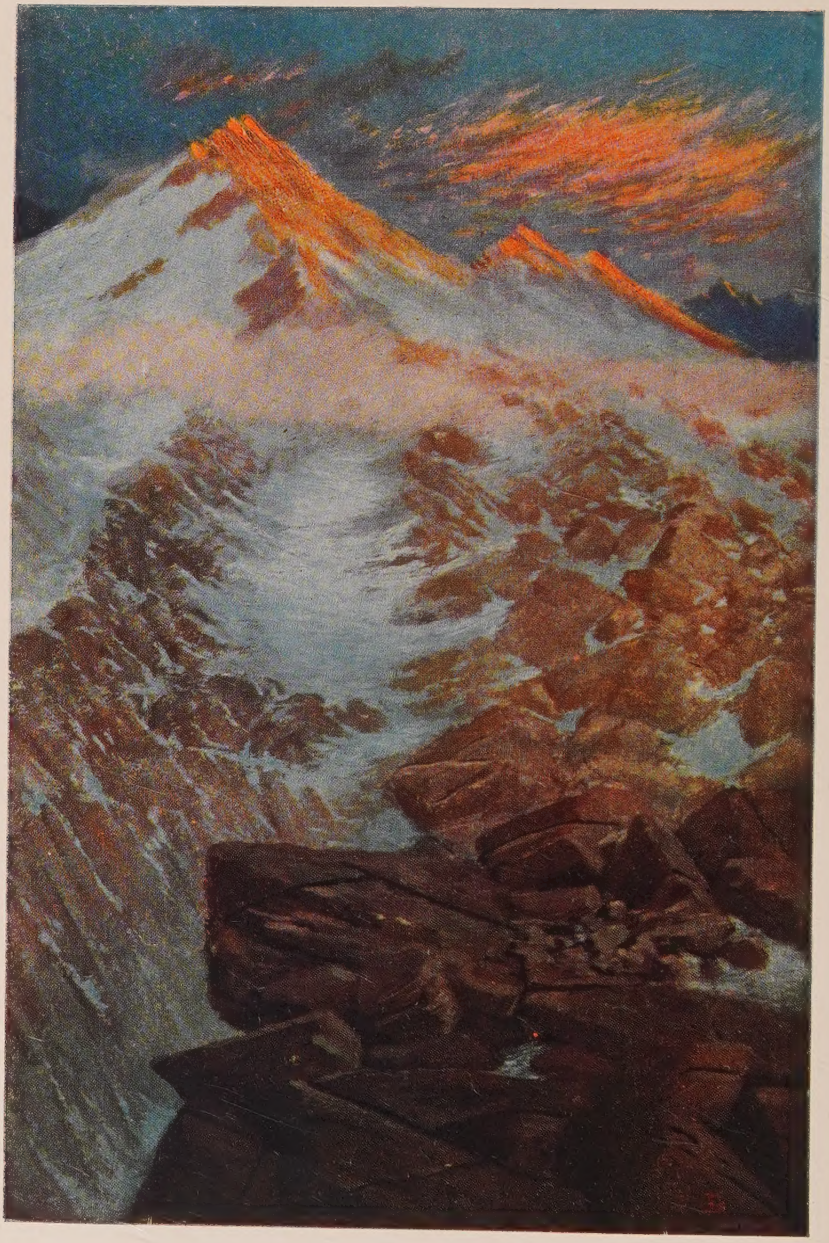

Frémont and '49

The Story of a Remarkable Career and its Relation to the Exploration and Development of our Western Territory, Especially of California

By

Frederick S. Dellenbaugh

Author of "A Canyon Voyage," etc.

"But courage, adventure, and the joy of what is uncertain, that hath never been dared; *courage*, methinketh, is the whole prehistoric development of man."

Nietzsche.

With Maps and Fifty Illustrations

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To

THE MEMORY

OF

THE PACIFIC COAST EMIGRANT

OF

THE CALIFORNIA FORTY-NINER

AND OF

FRÉMONT

"HIS CAMP-FIRES HAVE BECOME CITIES"

PREFACE

"O, while I live to be the ruler of life—not a slave,
To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
No fumes—no ennui—no more complaints, or scornful criticism."

WALT WHITMAN, *Poem of Joys.*

ALL we can get out of life is life. Frémont got a tremendous lot of it. His wallet was empty when he died and most of the time while he lived, but he wrote his name indelibly across half a continent, and he will be remembered when most of those who have spoken against him, and all they have said, will be but grains of sand in the interminable desert of the forgotten. The story of his life, one of the most interesting of our time, is told in the following pages with as much detail as was possible in a single volume. It has been prepared with deliberation, with attention to facts, and with a desire to avoid prejudice. When the last word has been said against Frémont; condemnation, ridicule, prejudice and all, he remains among the most virile and picturesque characters in the history of the United States; a character complete in itself; quiet, polite, seldom explaining and as seldom complaining. He took the storms as they came, with dignity, with patience, and with a kind of dumb resolution that commands admiration.

Once upon a time it was customary for an author to offer an apology, or at least a justification, for presenting to the public a new book. That modest habit long since has passed into Cimmerian darkness, but I may say that if any justifi-

cation were required for this volume it would lie in the fact that no consecutive and complete account of the entire career of this extraordinary person with his five exciting Western explorations and his war experiences has ever before been published. The story ramifies bewilderingly through the intricacies of our history in the three quarters of a century which he lived, and an extensive literature must be examined to secure its bearings.

Space was not available, nor was it necessary in carrying out the plan of the author, to pursue the side lines very far and if sometimes these appear to end somewhat abruptly it is because it was not deemed expedient to trace them further. The intention has been to so include and eliminate that the main narrative will flow with completeness to the final scene on the heights of the Hudson.

The maps have been selected with a view to exhibiting, as far as the limits would permit, the growth of knowledge of the Far West from before Frémont began in order that the reader may form an estimate of Frémont's originality in that field. From all that is presented it is evident that he was the first to scientifically examine and record the characteristics and the actual topography of the enormous reach of territory lying between the Mississippi and the Pacific, and which his researches were instrumental in bringing under our flag. Before his results were published the ideas of the public were vague and those of Congress absurd.

There have been in United States History three deciding, epoch-making events: The Declaration of Independence; The extension of control to the Pacific; and The State's Rights War. With the second of these momentous occurrences Frémont is inseparably connected, not more by his energy in reconnoitring the country of a foreign power and in the California affair, than by his lucid exposition of the true nature of that extensive and diversified domain. As this is the story of Frémont, not of California or the Far West, the reader will understand omissions of some highly

important and interesting incidents. To supply these he should have at his elbow two admirable books in this field; *California under Spain and Mexico*, by Irving Berdine Richman, and *California* by Josiah Royce. The latter's hostile attitude towards Frémont I mention. Aside from this the book is without prejudice.

I am free to admit that before I began my detailed examination into the career of Frémont I held something of that uncertain sense of opposition which is so aften encountered when mentioning him, but the deeper I got, the more I became satisfied that, even admitting many faults, Frémont has not received justice at the hands of his Government nor of his fellow countrymen. This is partly explained by the animosities of the campaign of 1856 which left an indelible stain. Hay and Nicolay in their *Life of Lincoln* remark: "Hostile journals delineated Frémont as a shallow, vainglorious, 'woolly-horse,' 'mule-eating,' 'free-love,' 'nigger-embracing' black Republican, an extravagant, insubordinate, reckless adventurer, a financial spendthrift and political mountebank," and it has since been difficult even for sensible people to disentangle their judgment from this fog of slander that still thickens the air. Frémont appears to have suffered from at least three causes; his success which brought against him the subtle powers of jealousy; extravagant laudation by his friends; and his active opposition to slavery.

It is now held that the British never had designs on California. While it may be true that the British government had no direct designs there were many indirect interests at work to obtain a footing. Had this been secured before Frémont began his definite operations they never could have been dislodged without war. California would have been a Canada on the Pacific. But after Frémont played his hand no foreign nation could have stepped in without direct antagonism to the United States, and he planned the affair so adroitly that in case it became necessary or advisable to

repudiate what he had done the path was clear. Even some of his later critics at home have been deceived and have tried to prove Frémont's intentions by the very documents that were written to veil his real purpose. Montgomery and Gillespie and later Stockton were not in doubt as to what Frémont and our Government intended, or as to his object in California. He was in a difficult situation, far from communication with the men, Benton, Polk, Bancroft, whose will he was endeavouring to execute, and he steered a course, which, all things considered was a very good one, perhaps the best possible at the time.

The thanks of the author are due to his friends the publishers for their kind patience over the delay in completing this book; to the New York Public Library for various favours; to Warren C. Crane, Esq., for the use of prints from his collection; to Mrs. E. H. Harris for the privilege of examining correspondence, on the subject of the interment of Frémont's remains and the monument to him, between her father the late William H. Whiton of Piermont and Mrs. Frémont, to Henry Gannett, Esq., for a map of the United States, and to Doctor D. T. MacDougal for desert photographs.

F. S. D.

New York,
April 10, 1914.

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PREPARATION

A Scientific Pathfinder—His Father and Mother—An Expulsion and a Recompense—A Foreign Cruise—Beginning Life in the Open—Jean Nicolas Nicollet, the Man of Science—Superior Instruction in Mapwork—Love at First Sight—An Elopement—On the Threshold.

EACH particular incident in the history of a country is generally linked with the name of some single prominent person, who represents, in the popular estimate at least, the success or failure of that incident, though as a rule human affairs are not so simple as this and many other individuals are concerned, some even more vitally than the accepted representative. In this way our acquisition of California is laid mainly to the enterprise and skill of John Charles Frémont, who was active in the circumstances of the conquest, and who so felicitously christened the entrance to San Francisco Bay, "The Golden Gate." Whatever may be said in the way of adverse criticism of him, and there are some who refuse to acknowledge his pre-eminence in this field, his endeavours were single-minded and sincere and he can never be dissociated from the beginnings of the great State that bounds our Pacific shores for more than half our domain, nor from the thrilling "'49" period which so amazingly developed it. The same may be said of the intervening

region where he carried on some important explorations which for originality, enterprise, and excellence stand to his everlasting credit. Pathfinder, as his admirers loved to call him, perhaps he was not in a strictly literal interpretation of that term, but on this basis there were no pathfinders after the first native inhabitants and the roaming buffalo. He himself seems never to have put forward any claim to being a pathfinder and invariably stated who had gone before and all the data he could find. He was, at any rate, a scientific pathfinder in that he was first to mark the trails on paper, and he travelled where few had preceded him in many cases, and where no such well-trained observer as he had ever gone. He was first to lay before the public accurate details of the vast region now comprising about one quarter of the United States, and which lay entirely south of the country traversed by Lewis and Clark in their great exploration. "Courage, adventure, and the joy of what is uncertain, that hath never been dared," seemed to be the balm of his soul, and he acted accordingly. If he did not always satisfy those who remained by the fireside, who is to blame?

Someone has said that no man is born whose work is not born with him, and this appears to be specially illustrated in the case of Frémont. He was a child of destiny if there ever was one. He was marked from birth for a picturesque and romantic career by the laws of heredity, as well as for the discouraging cup of Tantalus, for in all his wanderings and enterprises never did his grasp quite close on the elusive gifts with which fortune lured him on. The story properly begins with a more or less nomadic father, of artistic as well as scientific inclinations, also a John Charles, a Frenchman from near Lyons. He exhibited the trait that afterwards was to become so marked a feature of his first-born, by leaving home and taking passage across the sea for Saint Dominique (Haiti), then under the rule of his countrymen. This was not the matter-of-fact journey that it now is in our steam-propelled, floating hotels, but required some degree of

courage on the part of a traveller to set forth, particularly as foreign lands then regarded all strangers with deep suspicion, and more particularly, in his case, as the ocean was covered with English cruisers searching for Frenchmen of any description, the two countries being at war. The result was that, before he could arrive, the ship on which he had ventured was taken by a British man-o'-war. The prize, including of course the father of our future explorer, was sailed to a British island of the West Indies, and held there. To eke out the small prison allowance, he worked with other prisoners at basketry, and he also utilised his artistic talents by painting frescoes in the houses of the wealthy.

After several years of this life he finally succeeded in getting away, and reached Norfolk, Virginia, in his effort to get back to his native land. But the fates did not intend that he should ever see that land again. Basketry and fresco painting now gave place to the teaching of French, in the necessity for support and to raise money for his passage, but here the subtle warrior Cupid took a hand in the affair. He met the lady of his heart, another unusual character, and vital to this story. She was very beautiful, a daughter of one of the best families of Virginia, and, though young, her career in the way of unusual and unpleasant experiences rivalled his own. She was at this time, unwillingly, Mrs. Pryor. At the age of seventeen she had consented to marry Major John Pryor, a man forty-five years her senior, not for love, but because of the persistent urging of her sister and other relatives who deemed it, under the circumstances, expedient. For Anne Whiting's inheritance had been sadly dissipated by her mother's second husband, named Carey, also of distinguished ancestry, but, unfortunately for Anne, of correspondingly low business ability. The Whiting fortune was therefore considerably disintegrated and Anne found herself by no means overburdened by her financial resources. John Pryor was rich, the marriage was brought about, and it was a complete failure, as anyone

could have foretold. Twelve years of misery followed for the beautiful Anne, when, through the influence of powerful friends, the Legislature of Virginia was persuaded to grant an absolute divorce, and at twenty-nine she was free. She thereupon married the French teacher against the desire of all her relatives, for what was an unknown wandering Frenchman to the proud old Whiting stock, connected by marriage with the Washington family? Having followed their hearts once with undesirable results, she now followed her own, while the old Major, two years later, at seventy-six, solaced himself by marrying his housekeeper.

Some portion of her inheritance was left to her, and with this she and her new husband were able to lead the life they desired. John Charles had a fondness for the open air and for the study of ethnology, in which his wife was also interested. They invested in a traveller's equipment of that day, carriage, horses, camp outfit, servants, and so on, and began the investigation of the Indian tribes which still controlled millions of acres of land in the Southern States. Camping in the wilds, at times with the Indians, was now their occupation. Amid such scenes the future explorer received his prenatal impressions and influences, for it was in the prosecution of these journeys that he was born during a stop at Savannah, Georgia, January 21, 1813. In this same year of his birth, another person of immediate importance to his life and to this narrative comes briefly into the Frémont horizon. This was a young man of thirty-one, already a notable figure in the political arena of the country, and destined to become far more prominent during the whole of a long career: Thomas H. Benton. After breakfast on the morning of September 4, 1813, this brilliant young man had his historic encounter with the fiery Andrew Jackson, future President of the United States, then forty-six years of age. In Bigelow's excellent Life of Frémont he mentions that the parents chanced to pass the night previous to this affray at the inn where it took place, the balls from the pis-

St. Louis, Missouri
Metropolis of the West in the time of the Frémont Expeditions
From Meyer's *Universum*
Drawn from Nature

tols going through the room in which they happened to be sitting. This inn was the City Hotel, where Benton and his brother Jesse, the cause of the trouble, had stopped to avoid direct contact with Jackson who was at the other hotel, the Nashville Inn, across the square. But Jackson was bent on battle and sought the Bentons at the first opportunity. This ill-feeling between the former friends arose over Jackson's having acted as opposing second in a duel in which Benton's brother was involved, during Benton's absence on business of Jackson's. Benton had denounced Jackson in violent terms, Jackson had sworn to horsewhip him, and the dénouement was the above conflict. Jackson and Benton became friends again in after years.

Frémont was seven months and ten days old at this moment, but the man who was to be so closely associated with him in years to come was not, apparently, yet aware of his existence. More than a quarter of a century must elapse before these two lives were to converge again, so strangely does the shuttle of life weave the mysterious fabric. The mind whose great slogan was to be westward expansion by "manifest destiny," and the mind that was to operate vigorously to aid that destiny, were not yet tuned to the work.

Frémont the father was still bent on the return to France, and after the birth of a daughter and another son he laid his plans for this event, but he died in 1818. The widow declined to go to France with his elder brother Francis and family, not wishing to leave her own country, and moved instead to Charleston, South Carolina, where young Frémont was put to the study of law with John W. Mitchell, who became so much interested in the lad that at fourteen he sent him for academic instruction to the preparatory school of Dr. John Roberton, a Scotchman educated at Edinburgh, whose specialty was fitting boys for Charleston College. This was another of those fortunate associations which contributed to Frémont's fine mental development. Roberton "was thoroughly imbued with classic learning, and lived an

inner life among the Greeks and Latins. Under his enthusiastic instruction I became fond as himself of the dead languages, and to me also they became replete with living images," remarks Frémont. In a preface to a book the master published in 1850, he extols the personal charm and remarkable intellect of his pupil, especially commenting on his ability in mathematics. He was undoubtedly an exceptionally clever boy with an attractive manner and was quick to learn. Roberton was under the impression, though, that Frémont graduated in 1830 from Charleston College, but, as Frémont himself relates, he was expelled for inattention to his studies and for insubordination.

Thus early he exhibited the latter trait which was to lead him into difficulties, and be largely the cause of his missing some rewards which he deserved. But this spirit of insubordination was in reality only a profound independence of mind, admirable in a way, though sometimes out of place, and which in its turn served him well in the work of exploration when he was sole master.

Frémont was never dull, and this present insubordination and inattention at school were due to his being in love with a beautiful creole girl named Cecilia, not far from his own age, one of a family from Santo Domingo, with whom Frémont had been intimate from his fourteenth year. The nomadic strain in his blood impelled him to pass much time in the open air, with the two boys of this family, the two girls sometimes accompanying them, ranging the woods, islands, bays, on land and on sea, sailing, rowing, gunning, picnicking, till the schoolroom doubtless appeared a prison to him as it does to most vigorous boys. At seventeen he was "passionately in love" and devoted his time to Cecilia. "Those were the splendid outdoor days," he says enthusiastically in his *Memoirs*, "days of unreflecting life when I lived in the glow of a passion that now I know extended its refining influence over my whole life." He was in the senior class when he was expelled, very reluctantly, by the

faculty. Always well prepared at recitation, he neglected their repeated warnings as to his unwarranted absences, and finally there was nothing left but expulsion. There was no ill-feeling; Frémont acknowledged himself the transgressor. Several years later the faculty voluntarily revised their action and conferred on him the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts.

Frémont, as he remarks, was thus dreaming away his youth when two books that came his way woke him up. One of these was a "chronicle of men who had made themselves famous by brave and noble deeds, or infamous by cruel and base acts"; the other was a work on practical astronomy, in the Dutch language. He could not read Dutch, but the beautifully clear maps of the stars, and many lucid examples of astronomical calculations, fascinated him, and here began that love of astronomical work which, emphasised by his close association later with eminent men in this field, resulted in the excellent, abundant, and accurate observations that so distinctly differentiated his explorations from most of those which had gone before. With the aid of this book he spent his nights studying the constellations, and he also managed to learn from it the method of determining latitude and longitude.

He was reaching the age when he must seek some definite occupation, and by the aid of Mr. Poinsett, a friend of the family who was now and always of great help to him, he secured a position as teacher of mathematics on the sloop of war *Natchez*, which sailed in 1833 under Captain John P. Zantzinger for a three years' cruise along the coasts of South America. Frémont was twenty when the cruise began, and at that age it must have strengthened his nomadic tendencies and have been another step on the way towards his future choice of occupation. On returning to Charleston, 1836, Frémont went before an examining board of the navy and passed for the post of professor of mathematics at Norfolk. This he then declined and went to work instead

on a railway survey between Charleston and Augusta. A little later, 1837, he had an opportunity to go under Captain Williams of the U. S. Topographical Corps as an assistant on surveys for a railway from Charleston to Cincinnati. This work was immediately along the lines that Frémont seems to have been born for, and it was therefore entirely congenial. It is not surprising that he declares it was "a kind of picnic, with work enough to give it zest, and we were all sorry when it was over." But while this particular piece of outdoor occupation was soon finished (autumn of 1837), Frémont had now fully entered upon the vocation for which he was temperamentally and intellectually best adapted and in which he was eventually to become distinguished. Of his next engagement, that of assistant in ascertaining the extent and condition of the lands where Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina come together, held by the Cherokee, in a hurried reconnaissance under Captain Williams, in the winter of 1837, he remarks:

> The accident of this employment curiously began a period of like work for me among similar scenes. Here I found the path which I was destined to walk. Through many years to come the occupation of my life was to be among Indians and in waste places. There were to be no more years wasted in tentative efforts to find a way for myself. The work was laid out and it began here with a remarkable continuity of purpose.[1]

This first intercourse with the red men, a people with whom he was to become so familiar, was interesting. When he arrived with two other young fellows at the Cherokee camp, the men were all drunk after a great carouse. It would not be prudent to appear among them under these circumstances,

[1] *Memoirs of My Life*, by John Charles Frémont, etc., together with a sketch of the life of Senator Benton, in connection with Western Expansion, by Jessie Benton Frémont. A Retrospect of Fifty Years. Volume i., Chicago and New York, Belford Clark & Co., 1887 (no other volume published).

especially as they were feeling hostile towards the impending removal to the West. The squaws, not being allowed the manly privilege, were sober, and hid the visitors in a log out-cabin half full of shucked corn. "We did not pass a comfortable night. The shouts of the drunken Indians, and rats running over us, kept us awake, and we were glad when morning came. The night had been cold and our bath tub was the Natahéylé River. There was ice along the banks and the water in my hair froze into fretful quills." Some young men would have had enough, and would have taken the back track for home comforts after this introduction, but Frémont loved the life. Probably never then, nor in after years, was he more at home anywhere than by the camp fire, with the night wind sighing in the pines. It was his natural habitat. A duck is at home in the water, a sheep is at home on the hill, and a man is swayed in much the same way by ancestral impulses. Frémont went at this work with the vigour and skill that come from fitness. Sometimes they slept at an Indian cabin, sometimes with their pack-animals they penetrated through the forested mountains where no waggon had gone. Their larder was supplied by killing the nut-fattened pigs which ranged the hills. Sometimes they witnessed bloody frays amongst the natives when strong drink got the upper hand of the red man, but this was exceptional. "In their villages and in their ordinary farming life they lived peaceably and comfortably," and Frémont discovered what many others have found, that, "The depreciating and hurtful influence was the proximity of the whites."

When this Cherokee land survey was ended, 1838, he went home for a brief visit to his mother, and then, by the kindness of his friend Mr. Poinsett, Secretary of War, he was given an appointment by President Van Buren as second lieutenant in the Topographical Corps of the army and was ordered to Washington. And here we are introduced to another character vital to this story, one more of

the remarkable personalities which it was Frémont's fortune always to meet. It is another wandering Frenchman too, from that land where so many people think. This man was Jean Nicolas Nicollet, a scientist of the highest order, one who had an extraordinary influence on the future scientific attitude of the United States, as well as upon Frémont. Out of his meetings with several similar men at that time in Washington grew the now extensive organisation known as the American Association for the Advancement of Science. His influence on Frémont was to enhance and crystallise the original tendencies toward exact science, and probably Nicollet is more than anyone else responsible for the accuracy of Frémont's exploratory operations, and the attention to barometric observations, to latitudes and longitudes, to botany and geology, and all the rest of it. Nicollet was also a man with an interesting beginning. Now forty-seven years old, he had begun his career, at the early age of ten, in his native town of Cluses in Savoy, by playing on flute and violin for social entertainments. Then followed apprenticeship with a watchmaker of Chambréy till he was eighteen. He studied mathematics, gained a prize, succeeded in reaching Paris, where he studied astronomy and other sciences, received the decoration of the Legion of Honour before 1825, made money, speculated, and was crushed by financial ruin in which fell not only his own fortune, but the wealth of others who had trusted to his sagacity. He separated himself from these painful scenes and came to America, to New Orleans, probably in 1832, that is at the age of forty-two. He was without acquaintances, but soon found them and secured their interest in his desire to explore the upper Mississippi, scientifically and topographically. Pierre Chouteau, the noted fur trader, and Major Taliaferro, Indian Agent at Fort Snelling, specially aided him and brought his scheme to the attention of the general government in 1833. Nicollet at length secured instruments as a loan and some letters of approval, but no financial help.

Fort Snelling, Minnesota

Where St. Paul now stands

In 1838 when Frémont was there with Nicollet, it was the centre of all operations in the North-West

A part built of stone in 1820 still stands in the present military reservation

From Meyer's *Universum*

So determined was he, that, with the assistance of a few frontiersmen, he went ahead with his plans. Inadequate funds, and ill health resulting from exposure, were his handicaps. He had not thought of himself or of financial gain. At last in 1838, shattered physically and with his resources exhausted, he proceeded for recuperation to Baltimore, where he had friends. From there he was called to Washington at the instance of Mr. Poinsett. The government at last sensed the importance of the operations he had been engaged in, especially as they disclosed vast agricultural possibilities. The future was made easy but the help came too late, as help has a habit of coming. With the government back of him, he was to extend the survey in the region between the Mississippi and Missouri, and Frémont was appointed to assist him. "Field work in a strange region, in association with a man so distinguished," says Frémont, "was truly unexpected good fortune, and I went off from Washington full of agreeable anticipations." Frémont joined his chief at St. Louis, where the French scientist had gained many friends, especially among the clergy of the Catholic Church. He introduced Frémont everywhere, and they enjoyed suppers at the refectory, as well as social functions. In after years this friendly intercourse with Catholics here, and in Baltimore, where Nicollet also introduced him, was used, strangely enough, to Frémont's disadvantage.

Life in the field with Nicollet occupied two seasons, 1838 and 1839, and was all that Frémont anticipated. The first year M. de Montmort of the French Legation, and Eugene Flandin, a young New Yorker of French descent, with a skilled German botanist, Charles Geyer, were also of the party. The country being level, the camp oufit was transported on carts, with Canadian voyageurs as drivers. They went to Big Swan Lake, up the Waraju River, worked around the Pelican Lakes, and over the Coteau des Prairies, to the Red Pipestone Quarry, the limit of their western travel. Many Indians were about, but there was no trouble with any of them.

The Indians have a belief [says Frémont] that the Spirit of the Red Pipe Stone speaks in thunder and lightning whenever a visit is made to the Quarry. With a singular coincidence such a storm broke upon us as we reached it, and the confirmation of the legend was pleasing to young Renville and the Sioux who had accompanied us. . . . This famous stone, when we saw it, was in a layer about a foot and a half thick, overlaid by some twenty-six feet of red colored indurated sand-rock.[1]

Thence they went to the Lac qui Parle, taking in on the way the lake country of the Coteau des Prairies, and then to the Lesueur and Blue Earth rivers. Frémont had his first experience, on this trip, with a prairie fire. Three of the party were off on a hunt and were awakened in the night by the crackling of flames, and found themselves surrounded. Immediately making a "back fire," they put their animals and their belongings in the bare spot thus secured, and were safe. The prairie fire is now a thing of the past in this country, but those who have seen the flames moving by day with race-horse speed, or filling the night sky with an ominous glow, will well remember the impressiveness of the sight. The party now returned to St. Louis and prepared for the work of the following year. With this expedition of 1839 another important person in the education of Frémont comes in view. This is Étienne Provost, called *l' homme des montagnes*, a man probably as familiar with the still, to the people at large, mysterious Far West as any man then living, not excepting Kit Carson or Jim Bridger. The association with Provost must have brought much knowledge to Frémont's quick intelligence. Geyer was again botanist, and they were accompanied by a French army officer, Captain Belligny, merely to see the country.

Steamboats were in operation on the Missouri, and while their ascent was often dubious of success, they usually

[1] For information on Pipestone see Catlinite in *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I., U. S. Bur. Eth., Bulletin 30.

Type of Missouri River Steamboat Prior to 1840

From *A History of the Missouri River*, by Phil. E. Chappell, Kansas Historical Association Collections, vol. ix.

arrived. On the second Nicollet expedition the party left St. Louis in April on the *Antelope*, and they were seventy days in reaching Fort Pierre (Chouteau), in the centre of what is now South Dakota, an average of about eighteen miles a day. The few steamboats on the Missouri before 1840 were clumsy, rough-built craft, usually from 100 to 130 feet long, twenty to thirty feet beam, seven feet depth of hold, and drawing from three to five feet of water. They had two boilers sometimes, but only one engine, of the high-pressure type. Five or six miles an hour was the maximum speed, and often the current opposing progress was so strong that the vessel would remain quite stationary for moments at a time. At night they were accustomed to tie up to a convenient bank, where the crew chopped wood, the only possible fuel, for the next day's run. Up to 1832 the keel-boat had been the cargo carrier, as well as the smaller "mackinaw." The keel-boat was from fifty to seventy-five feet long, with a beam of fifteen or twenty feet, and thirty inches draught, and as it was operated by sheer muscle, by pole, tow-line, oars, or occasionally a sail, the loud panting, struggling, uncertain steamboat was an advance in labour saving that was heartily welcomed.

Starting out from Fort Pierre, the expedition was immediately in the depths of an Indian country, and they met with many of them, Yankton, Sisseton, and other Sioux, in one instance a village of about two thousand, but they had no difficulty. Like most Frenchmen, Nicollet wished to respect the desires of the natives, and so did his men. Nicollet attended solely to his work and paid no attention to hunting for sport or any of the numerous diversions of frontier life. Frémont received here some good schooling in the method of traversing an Indian country which doubtless held him to a sane and steady course in the coming experiences. At this time also he made the acquaintance of the buffalo.

This was an event [he remarks] on which my imagination had been dwelling. Riding slowly up a short slope we came directly upon them. Not a hundred yards below us was the great, compact mass of animals, moving slowly along, feeding as they went, and making the loud, incessant grunting noise peculiar to them. There they were. . . . How I got down that short hillside I never knew. From the moment I saw the herd, I never saw the ground again till all was over.

And then he discovered that the swift rush had carried him far out, and alone, on the wide and desolate plain, with the sun nearing the horizon. He attempted to hit the direction of the camp, and followed what he thought was a horse trail, but it was a buffalo track. About midnight he saw a rocket shoot up far in the south and knew that was camp, but he had the experience of spending the night with his horse under the stars. In the morning, Frenière, one of their mountain men, sent by Nicollet, found him and guided him back. He had time to roast a piece of buffalo meat on a stick and drink some coffee before the party proceeded. Meat roasted on a stick is excellent—there is no more palatable way of preparing it—and barring lack of full sleep, he was no worse for his adventure. Nicollet was the first to use the barometer in obtaining altitudes of the interior, and he was tireless in making his skilful observations for latitude and longitude. From Frenière, Frémont learned much in the way of plainscraft, for Frenière was a master in that line.

The expedition of 1839 proceeded across the upland of Coteau du Missouri, to Medicine Knoll, then to Rivière à Jacques (James River), past the "Lake of the Scattered Small Wood," up the valley of the Jacques, to Bone Hill, thence north to the Sheyenne valley and up this through enormous moving herds of buffalo, to Devil's Lake, the ultimate destination. From here they went east nearly to Red River of the North, then down to the valley of the Sheyenne, near

where this stream curves northeast to Red River, thence south to the headwaters of the Minnesota, then on to the Lac qui Parle, the trading post of the Renvilles. In the late autumn after reconnoitering along the Minnesota and Mississippi Frémont with a detachment arrived in a bark canoe at Prairie du Chien. There a steamboat was about starting for St. Louis. Instead of taking this he concluded to rest a day or two and take the next one. "Next morning it was snowing hard, and the river was frozen from bank to bank. I had time enough while there to learn two things, one, how to skate, and the other, the value of a day." It took weeks of winter travel overland to reach St. Louis.

Frémont went on to Washington to assist in the preparation of the map, and learned of the death of his brother. His sister had died some time before, leaving his mother and himself now the sole representatives of the family. He went to Charleston for a visit, and then with Lieutenant Scammon took hold of the Nicollet map material. He now had the advantage of acquaintance with another exceptionally gifted scientific man, the superintendent of the Coast Survey, Hassler, who, like Nicollet, was a foreigner, having been born in Switzerland, and like Nicollet he was an originator of scientific methods. The opportunity was not lost on Frémont, and the results of this association are apparent in all his future scientific work. Hassler was a notable and conspicuous figure in the life of Washington. He and Nicollet were both bachelors. They arranged to live together at Hassler's house and took Frémont into the partnership, which shows, more than anything else, their esteem for him. The house was on Capitol Hill, and, as they had a competent French chef, the cuisine was of a high order. Nicollet caused an observatory to be built on top of the house where a series of observations was carried on nightly. The map work was done in the Coast Survey building near by, and all went smoothly along.

The time was now 1840. Frémont was twenty-seven.

The two life streams that so nearly touched back, in 1813 at the Nashville Hotel, again flowed near. Senator Benton was profoundly interested in the Nicollet survey, and he came to the office to see how the map was progressing. It was an important moment for Frémont. He says:

> The results of our journeys between the two great rivers had suggested to him the same work for the broader field beyond the Missouri. . . . In the course of his inquiries he dwelt on the unoccupied country beyond the Missouri and the existing uncertain and incomplete knowledge concerning it. The interview left on me a profound impression and raised excited interest. The ideas suggested remained fixtures in my mind. The thought of penetrating into the recesses of that wilderness region filled me with enthusiasm—I saw visions. Formerly I had been entirely devoted to my intended profession of engineering. . . . In this interview with Mr. Benton my mind had been quick to see a larger field and differing and greater results. It would be travel over a part of the world which still remained the New—the opening up of unknown lands; the making unknown countries known. . . . This interview with Mr. Benton was pregnant with results and decisive of my life.[1]

This was the beginning of frequent visits and a friendship. Frémont and Nicollet were often at the Benton home, where they met Senators Linn and Dodge and other influential men from beyond the Alleghanies. The only drawback was the declining health of Nicollet, who nevertheless retained his enthusiasm on western explorations. He delayed writing his report, thinking he would later feel stronger, and meanwhile Frémont and Scammon carried out the plotting of the topographical notes on paper.

The Bentons had five children, four daughters and a son, Randolph, the latter but twelve years of age. The second daughter Jessie was at a boarding-school in Georgetown, and, on the occasion of a school concert, Frémont

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 65.

accompanied the eldest sister to hear it, and the most important influence of his life burst upon him. Jessie was only fifteen, "just in the bloom of her girlish beauty," and she made an immediate impression. It was love at first sight and forever on both sides. Months passed before he saw her again when she came home for a vacation. Both Mr. and Mrs. Benton objected to this attachment, not because of any personal quality in Frémont, but because they did not approve of the unsettled existence of the wife of an army officer for their daughter, and they thought her too young for any serious decision of this sort. Frémont, however, continued a welcome visitor at the house.

Nicollet did not recover his health, but grew worse, and the delayed report was further delayed. He suddenly wished to have the lower part of the Des Moines River surveyed to add to his map, and, at his request, Frémont was sent to secure the necessary data. Frémont was reluctant to go, the love affair with Miss Benton being the magnet, but accompanied by Geyer, the botanist, he struck out and soon accomplished the work. He intimates that the desire to have the Des Moines added to the map really originated with the Bentons with the hope that absence would diminish the ardour of the lovers, but, if this was so, the purpose failed. A year of probation had been agreed on. That proved too much, and to settle the matter, evidently in what they thought was the simplest way, one day, October 19, 1841, they slipped away and were married by the Reverend Father van Horseigh, a Catholic priest who would perform a marriage ceremony for meritorious persons without too many questions.

Mrs. John Charles was seventeen and he was twenty-eight. He says of his wife:

> Her qualities were all womanly, and education had curiously preserved the down of a modesty which was innate. There had been no experience of life to brush away the bloom. She had

inherited from her father his grasp of mind, comprehending with a tenacious memory; but with it a quickness of perception and instant realization of subjects and scenes in their completed extent, which did not belong to his; and with these, warm sympathies, a generous pity for human suffering, and a tenderness and sensibility that made feeling take the place of mind.[1]

Frémont now worked hard on the completion of the Nicollet map in order to get it out of the way, for greater things were projected. An expedition to the far region beyond the Missouri had taken definite shape. Nicollet was to be at the head, with Frémont as first assistant. It was an expedition to indicate and describe the line of emigrant travel, and "the best positions for military posts, and to describe and fix in position the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains, at which this initial expedition was to terminate. At this time the South Pass, at the head of the Platte River, was the one most available for our emigration and already used." Benton, who was the actual promoter and power behind this expedition, it being a part of his "manifest destiny" idea of western expansion, perceived regretfully by New Year's Day, 1842, that the noble Nicollet never again would be able to ride the western plains, and he decided to make Frémont, who was partly at least the originator of the plan, the leader of the party. Frémont says, "with the New Year began my joint work with Mr. Benton in behalf of our western territories." Just how much this meant would be interesting to know now in the light of future developments, some of which have called down upon Frémont much adverse criticism, in spite of the fact that he always appears to have had in view the best interests of his country. It shows, for one thing, that Benton and Frémont were close together in all that followed, close in the determination not to lose California to the United States by backwardness and lack of decision. Benton always considered

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 67.

that we had surrendered our just rights by allowing the boundary with Spain to be settled at the Sabine and Red rivers, in 1819, and he dreamed of getting this land back in some honourable way. He was opposed to the annexation of Texas as long as Texas was at odds with Mexico, but his keen judgment told him that, with the loose hold Mexico had on California, the constant friction, and rumours of independence, something was about to occur, and the relations between Mexico and the United States were already in a precarious state. He also was certain that Great Britain had an eye on the Bay of San Francisco, and on California as a whole, and evidently he intended that our government should be prepared and ready for developments as far as he could accomplish it.

Frémont himself was thoroughly equipped to enter upon the great work of his life. The opportunity was in his hand of bringing to the attention of the country the character and value of the enormous stretch of territory lying unoccupied between the Missouri and the Pacific, a large part of it foreign. His operations in the next few years fall in one of the most interesting periods of the history of this country. Benton, pointing to the sunset, exclaimed:

> "There is the East,
> There lies the road to India."

Frémont turned his face that way and halted only when the Golden Gate was won.

CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS AND PROSPECTS

The Great Wilderness and its Six Formidable Barriers—Some Mythical Rivers—The Original Inhabitants—Arrival of the Spaniards—Old Towns in New Mexico—California Alta Settlement by Missions—The Remarkable Entrada of Padre Escalante—American Invaders—The Northwest *versus* British—The Southwest *versus* Mexicans—California *versus* the Field—California Alta Adrift—Who Gets California?

WHILE the main facts of the broad stretch of North American wilderness lying between the Missouri and the Pacific which so enthused the minds of Senator Benton and his young son-in-law, John Charles Frémont, in 1841, were then known to roving trappers and fur traders, and of course locally to the various tribes of natives, it was nevertheless in large measure a land of mystery. No accurate map existed, no map at all of a great portion, and many of the salient characteristics were as yet unfathomed. Especially was that part spreading between the Wasatch and the Sierra Nevada, south of Snake River, uninvestigated, though several trapping parties had ventured within its desolate expanse. Ogden, of the Hudson Bay Company, in 1825, was first on record to reach the banks of the river Frémont later named Humboldt, at first called Mary's River, then Ogden's. Jedediah Smith had twice, in 1826–28, crossed the desert valleys to and from California, and Joseph Walker, in 1833, had gone down the Humboldt and over the Sierra to Monterey, then back the next year by a more southern course.

The general topographic features encountered in going westward from the Missouri across the immense new country

were, first the Great Plains with an average elevation above the sea of about two thousand feet, considered by Pike, Long, and other prominent men of the early quarter of the nineteenth century a "Great American Desert," which they believed would forever form an effective barrier between the settlements of the United States and those of Mexico. This desert has vanished; but in the beginning the plains actually offered a considerable barrier, the first of six, against exploration. They rolled away to the beckoning West, mile upon mile like a mighty petrified sea, to the very foothills of the second repelling barrier, the imposing, ponderous chain of the Rocky Mountains extending northerly and southerly across the heart of the wilderness, dividing it into almost equal parts. At a central locality of this great interior mountain system, six long rivers find their source: the Columbia, the Colorado, the Rio Grande, the Arkansas, the Platte (described as a thousand miles long and nine inches deep), and the mighty Missouri. These streams, beginning so near together, immediately diverge, and four of them sweep away to different seas, parting from the dry land at points widely separated. Each, therefore, possesses an enormous valley or drainage basin.

Before 1830 other great rivers were imagined to exist in the region west of Salt Lake, the Buenaventura taking its rise in the Rocky Mountains and flowing westward through a "Lake Salado" to the Bay of San Francisco, evidently based on the Sevier, the Rio Timpanogos, and the Rio Los Mongos, based respectively on the Humboldt, and perhaps on the Owyhee, or possibly on an imagined extension eastward of Rogue River. Both of the latter fabulous streams were supposed to rise in a "Lake Timpanogos" (Utah Lake originally, but a name later applied to Salt Lake) and like the Buenaventura they flowed into the Pacific. On the map of North America by A. Finley (Philadelphia, 1826) the three mythical rivers are confidently drawn from source to finish, though maps of earlier date do not show them.

The Buenaventura was the last of these myths to expire. Even after the Sevier was known to sink, it was imagined at some point to rise again and flow on to the ocean, and it was this fancy which kept the Buenaventura myth alive. Farnham tells of a Captain Young whose "supposition was that by travelling westward he should strike the Sevére River at some point where it rose from the sands, and following its course, should be led to the Bay of San Francisco." Captain Young lost all his animals and five men. "This was the last attempt," continues Farnham, "to explore this awful waste. And long will it be ere man can know the silent gloom and horrors of its dreadful depths."[1] It was the journeys of Jedediah Smith (1826–28) and of Joseph Walker (1833–34), the latter one of Bonneville's aids, which eliminated the mythical rivers; and Bonneville does not indicate them on his map.[2] Benton claimed the honour for Frémont,[3] but it hardly belongs directly to him, though it may be said that until Frémont traversed the country there was no definite scientific decision on the matter; after his expedition nothing was possible to the most active imagination.

Just beyond the crest of the Rocky Mountains in the central region is a series of large, beautiful valleys ranging from north to south and called the North, Middle, and South Parks, and the San Luis Valley, formerly also spoken of as a "park." South Park in very early days was known as Bayou Salade. Following these came the immediate valley of the formidable Colorado River, one of the most extraordinary features of the wilderness, the third, and the most effective, barrier of all against exploration; a line of

[1] *Travels in California and Oregon*, by T. J. Farnham, p. 324, published 1849. Farnham was there in 1840–41.

[2] See Bonneville's map published in the Carey, Lea & Blanchard edition of 1837 of Irving's *Bonneville*, reproduced on a small scale in *Pacific Railway Reports*, vol. xi., f. p. 34, and in this volume facing page 24. The original was not to be found in 1858.

[3] Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, vol. ii., p. 580.

deep, barren, rock-bound chasms called in Spanish "*cañons*" (in English the *ñ* being rendered *ny*), one, now called Grand and Marble, 283 miles long, reaching a depth of between 5000 and 6000 feet, and a width of more than twelve miles, cut down by the rapid river through a poorly watered country, and presenting for about a thousand miles as difficult an obstruction to the traveller as could be devised. It was only at a few places far apart that a practicable passage from one side to the other existed, and the conditions are not much different to-day. Together with the aridity and consequent scarcity of springs, these canyons, from whose precipitous cliffs one might hear the roar of the river, and even plainly see its seething waters while dying of thirst,[1] presented an appalling obstacle; they were universally dreaded and avoided, fearful tales of their dangers and mysteries being in vogue, the lower gorges being the last mystery of the wilderness to be fully explained.[2]

Farther west came the splendid summits of the Wasatch, the fourth barrier, which in itself formed the eastern rim of the fifth barrier, the Great Basin, where flowed the mythical rivers until the discovery that all rivers of this remarkable table-land, 4000 to 5000 feet above sea-level, flow nowhere in particular but perforce mount vaporously into the air, or end in dry earth, or in lakes which themselves are limited by evaporation or by subterranean outlets. Some of these lakes lie at the foot of the sixth, and last, great barrier, the stupendous snowy chain of the Sierra Nevada, the "White Saw," the limit, on the sunset side, of the vast dry table-land, so completely shut off from the ocean, where, in a bygone age, lakes of far different aspect, of vast depth, and of

[1] Jim Bridger had seen the canyons. A friend of his, E. L. Berthoud, wrote me: "Bridger would tell in camp of the cañon of the Colorado and Green River and of the almost utter impossibility of getting water from either cañon, altho in full sight of an abundance of it, which I bitterly experienced when trying to explore down Green River, south of White River in Utah in 1861."

[2] See *The Romance of the Colorado River* and *A Canyon Voyage*, by F. S. Dellenbaugh. Putnams.

enormous extent, flung their waves at the foot of the glaciated peaks. One of these long departed seas, whose old shore lines are yet easily traced along the mountain slopes, is called by geologists Lake Bonneville,[1] thus perpetuating a name Washington Irving in his delightful book on Bonneville[2] applied to the remnant of the departed waters now known as Great Salt Lake. This remnant, resembling the Dead Sea of Palestine in the density of its water, is at an altitude of 4218 feet (instead of 1300 feet below the ocean as lies the surface of the Dead Sea), with a mean depth of less than twenty feet. Immediately to the west of it is the nearest approach to a real desert to be found within the United States, the finality of the original extensive "Great American Desert," doubtless itself destined to blossom in the future, a portion of the Great Basin table-land, all of which is extremely arid. The Great Basin is by no means a level tract. It is broken by numerous north-and-south, short, rough mountain ranges lying side by side, some of which have an altitude of 8000 feet above the ocean; that is to say 4000 feet above the general level of the Basin. These ranges, opposed transversely to the direct line of travel to the Pacific Slope, united with the lack of water, and the dryness of the air, made journeys there extremely difficult and hazardous. One valley on the western border is partly below sea-level and in the days of '49 received the title of Death Valley from a party of emigrants who lost their way in it with terrible results.[3]

The Sierra Nevada is a range of extreme grandeur and

[1] "History of Lake Bonneville," by G. K. Gilbert, in *Report of U. S. Geological Survey*, 1880–81, and *U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin*, N. S., No. 19, 1911. Lake Lahontan in north-western Nevada was another of these ancient seas.

[2] *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, by Washington Irving (Putnams, New York), first published in 1837, by Carey, Lea & Blanchard, Philadelphia, with the title, *The Rocky Mountains; or Scenes, Incidents, and Adventures in the Far West, digested from the Journal of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville*, etc., by Washington Irving. In two volumes.

[3] *Death Valley in '49*, by Wm. L. Manly. San José, Cal., 1894.

beauty, and some of its valleys, like the Yosemite and the Hetch-Hetchy, are among the most majestic spectacles of the world. It protects from the east winds the long, central, fruitful valleys of the San Joaquin and the Sacramento, which form the very heart of California. On the west these valleys are guarded by another range, parallel with the coast, and consequently called the Coast Range. This and the Sierra Nevada unite near the 40th parallel and together they extend on northwards as the Cascade Range. All the country east of this Sierra Nevada Cascade Range as far as the 100th meridian is arid, the rainfall is slight, but owing to the large number of mountains that receive on their heights a considerable amount of precipitation, especially in winter, there are many permanent rivers and creeks the waters of which are now utilised for purposes of irrigation. This was not a modern idea; the natives of the New Mexican region practised irrigation centuries before the arrival of the whites, and the remains of old canals are still to be found. The streams frequently flow through deep canyons in such a way that the General Government has been able, by constructing huge dams, to back the water into depressions above, creating, in this manner, large and deep reservoirs by which millions of acres of land are being brought under cultivation, and the "desert" made to produce crops prolific and of high quality, where the opponents of western expansion declared the country was not worth a pinch of snuff. Dry farming is another method of redeeming lands heretofore believed to be worthless for agricultural operations, and vast areas are made useful by this simple, constant cultivation of the surface of the dry soil.

The climate is variable, everywhere changing with altitude, with relation to the major mountain systems, and with proximity to the Pacific. Temperatures average higher on the Pacific Slope than on the Atlantic Coast for the same latitudes. A remarkable feature is the extreme differences in altitudes and in temperatures. From 276

feet below sea-level in Death Valley, and 270 feet below in the Salton Basin, there is a range up to a multitude of peaks which climb beyond the 14000-foot mark, the largest number of the high peaks being in the State of Colorado.

At first this enormous territory contained innumerable wild animals; so many that for a long time men believed there could be no limit to the quantity that might indiscriminately be killed. On the plains and ranging across the Rocky Mountains as far as Green River and the head of Snake River, there roamed millions of buffalo (*Bison Americanus*), and when the beaver, which first tempted the European into the wilderness, began to diminish in numbers, the buffalo were more specially hunted, till at last they were slaughtered by the thousand merely for their hides, tallow, and tongues.[1] There were also bear in abundance, the one called "white bear," now known as grizzly, being the most dangerous; in the early days almost proof against the low-powered rifles, muzzle-loading too, with which the trappers were provided. Almost every other kind of animal known on this continent was found here: deer, elk, mountain sheep, goats, cougars (the so-called mountain lions), wild cats, wolves, lynx, rabbits, pine and sage hens, grouse, turkeys, quail, trout and other fish, lizards of many sizes up to the Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*), a poisonous creature two feet long much dreaded, scorpions, centipedes, tarantulas, several species of rattlesnake, and, on the coast, seals and sea lions.

In the way of vegetation there were some extraordinary species to keep pace with the animals. The most remarkable is the giant ancient trees, the oldest reaching back for their beginning more than a thousand years (1335 by actual count of the annual rings of one). These grow in the Sierra Nevada in a limited area and have been named

[1] *The Extermination of the American Bison*, by William T. Hornaday, Washington, 1889. Also, *Reports of the American Bison Society*, New York Zoological Park.

On the Plains of Southern Nevada

The *Clistoyucca aborescens* or Joshua Tree. Note the clusters of blossoms on the ends of branches
Photograph by Dr. D. T. MacDougal, Desert Laboratory

Sequoia gigantea,[1] after Sequoyah (Latinised) the inventor of the Cherokee syllabary. They rise to a height of more than three hundred feet. The allied and more abundant redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) also grows to an unusual height. It is seldom found more than twenty-five miles from the ocean. Another indigenous tree of great importance is the piñon or pinyon (*Pinus edulis*), a small pine, bearing in profusion an exceedingly palatable and nutritious nut, upon which the tribes of its habitat rely for a part of their subsistence. Like the sequoia the pinyon is confined to a limited area, though an area of considerable extent. Many singular plants exist: cacti, yucca, etc., and on the desert-like plains of southern Nevada and southern California, is one of the strangest, the tree yucca (*Clistoyucca arborescens*), or Joshua tree, illustrated on opposite page, growing to a height of about twenty feet.[2]

The human population was large but widely scattered. It belonged to the American race, usually spoken of as Indians in this country in popular language, and Amerinds[3] scientifically. The various groups are now classified mainly by language affiliation. The great plains were dominated by the mobile Siouan tribes with their portable tepees; the Shoshonean stock occupied the district from the crest or divide of the Rocky Mountains to the Sierra Nevada north of 37°, while below that parallel were two groups of Athapascans, Apache, and Navajo, with various tribes of house-building Amerinds of sedentary habits classed together as Pueblos (or Puebloans), not linguistically, for their languages differ, but because of the similarity of their habits and villages. One group, the Moki (Moquis, Hopi) is classified linguistically with the great Shoshonean stock. In California Alta an astonishing number of different

[1] Before the glacial period the sequoias existed on three continents.

[2] Trelease describes it as "the largest and most imposing of the Yucceæ of the United States." "The Yucceæ," by William Trelease, p. 42, *Thirteenth Annual Report Missouri Botanical Garden.*

[3] Amerind is a contraction of American Indian.

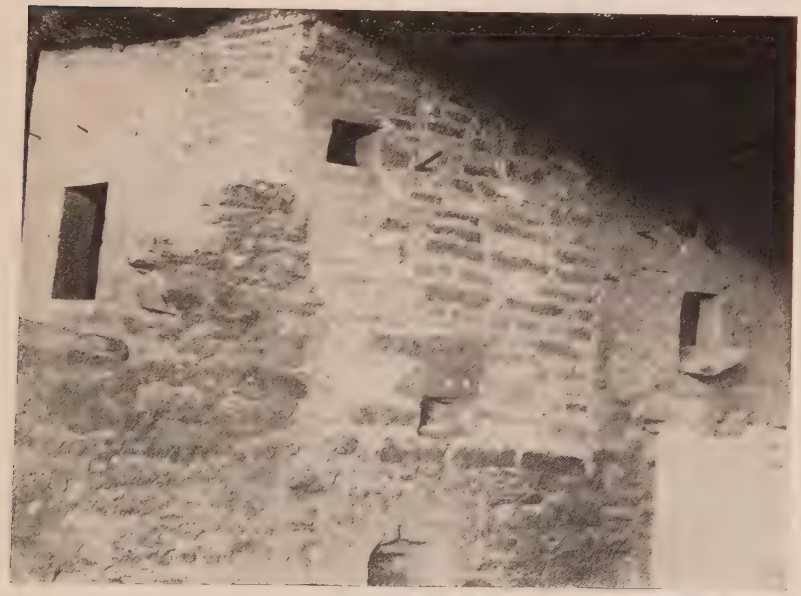
stocks was discovered, each with only a small representation. These people were, in the beginning, mild mannered, and, from their use of roots to eke out their supplies, they were often contemptuously spoken of as "Diggers,"[1] the white man forgetting that his own race also belongs to the diggers. But most of the aboriginal people west of the Missouri lived by the chase, except south of the 37th parallel, where maize, beans, melons, squash, peppers, peaches, cotton, figs, etc., were widely cultivated. The peaches and figs were introduced by the Spaniards; the other things were grown from earliest times, before the coming of the Europeans.

The Puebloans dwelt in substantial houses, constructed of stone, or of sun-dried brick known as adobes, in valleys, canyons, and on the summits of cliff-bound tables known as mesas. At the same time there were innumerable ruins of former habitations, some of which were the result of shifting residence, while others had been the homes of groups which had altogether disappeared. Ruins are often found in the huge cavelike recesses of cliffs and of canyon walls, peculiar to a certain sandstone formation, and eminently inviting to a people on the defensive. These have been called cliff-dwellings, the former occupants Cliff-dwellers, and some people are under the impression that they were a mysterious race different from the other Amerindians, which was not the case. Ancient house ruins can be traced all along the course of the Colorado and Green rivers from below the mouth of the Virgin to, at least, White River, with a wide range on both sides.[2]

In the native occupied villages of the South-west the country possessed actual permanent settlements long before the arrival of the whites, and when they finally came in search of "The Seven Cities," fabulously rich, these little

[1] Possibly the term was corrupted from a tribal name *Diegueño*.

[2] See *The North-Americans of Yesterday*, by F. S. Dellenbaugh. Putnams. A list of tribes and stocks is given in an appendix.



Views of Spruce Tree House
Cliff dwelling, Mancos Canyon, Mesa Verde, Colorado
Photographs by John Wetherill

towns, ungilded and unadorned, were a cruel disappointment. Yet in after years they were welcome places of refuge for many a trapper or hunter where he could obtain food and shelter, without price if necessary. Hospitality was a part of the Amerindian ritual destroyed only by the neglect or refusal of the whites to reciprocate. The Pueblo-ans had plenty of maize, watermelons, beans, squash, etc., and, after the coming of the Spaniards, sheep and horses.

It was as early as 1540 that Coronado and his army broke their way through from Mexico and made headquarters at Tiguex,[1] after a long siege of the place. From Tiguex the country was examined and Coronado himself travelled eastward almost to the present site of Kansas City. Within a half century others followed to "New Mexico" and before 1680 numbers of Spaniards were living in the Rio Grande valley, and the padres had founded missions and built substantial churches. In 1680 the discontent of the natives developed into a rebellion, so well directed that every foreigner was either killed or driven from the country. With Europeans this energy against a foe would have been commended; with Amerinds it was classed as treachery. The Europeans were, in their own opinion, the only people with rights, and they soon came again with a more powerful force. The Spaniards then remained masters of the region for about one hundred and fifty years, till 1848, when we annexed them. Seventy-five years before this insurrection Santa Fé was founded, by Juan de Oñate, and it has been the chief town (though not now the largest) of New Mexico ever since. Four years in advance of Henry Hudson's discovery of Manhattan Island, that is to say, in 1605, this capital of the Far South-west was established. The church shown at page 30 which, somewhat modified by the storms and disintegration of three centuries, is still standing, is stated to have

[1] A village situate in 1540 not far below the present town of Socorro on the Rio Grande. It has erroneously been placed by modern writers at Bernalillo.

been built in 1582, by some in 1545. While this is not probable, it is not impossible, for there were earnest padres with Coronado, in 1540–42, some of whom remained. What they did is not recorded.

From Santa Fé the northern country was early examined for a considerable distance, Ribera reaching a point on Grand River, and he may have gone farther. Meanwhile the indomitable French were advancing from the north-east, and in 1682, three quarters of a century after the Spaniards had settled in Santa Fé, the Sieur de la Salle came down the Mississippi and made the claim at its mouth to "Louisiana" which included everything the Spaniards and British did not already hold. Another nobleman, the Sieur Pierre Gaulthier de Varennes de la Verendrye, in 1738, entered from the Manitoba region and came as far south as the Mandan villages, near what is now Bismarck in North Dakota.[1] His two sons arrived in 1742 and proceeded from the Mandans west, and south-west, to the Rocky Mountains, which they reached in the early part of 1743. It is probable that they went as far as the Wind River range. In 1739 two other Frenchmen went up the South Platte for a long distance, so the French, by right of exploration, had a strong hold on all the Mississippi Valley.

A half century later, 1793, Mackenzie succeeded in crossing the continent by way of Peace River Pass and arrived on the shore of the Pacific not far from Queen Charlotte Sound.[2] This was the first known crossing of the continent by white men except the far southern journey of Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions, from some point on the Texas coast to the west coast of Mexico. Reports of a very large "River of the West," sometimes called the Oregon

[1] "Verendrye's Journal in English and French," by Douglas Brymner, in *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1889; also *L'Ouest Canadien, Sa découverte par le Sieur de la Verendrye*, by L'Abbé G. Dugas. Montreal, Cadieux & Derome, 1896.

[2] *Voyages*, by Alexander Mackenzie. Barnes & Co., reprint, N. Y., 1903.

Church of San Miguel, Santa Fé, New Mexico

As it was before the hurricane of 1872. The tower is now lacking. One of the oldest structures in the United States. Said to have been built in 1582; rebuilt, 1710. Santa Fé was founded 1605

after a mention of it in Jonathan Carver's book,[1] flowing to the western sea, figured on maps at least as early as 1753, though the place of its exit to the ocean could not be determined. Heceta, a Spanish navigator, found a bay in 1775 in latitude 46° 9′, with a strong current, and eddies, which led him to surmise that there was a large river or a strait at the place. As he failed to settle the problem he cannot be said to have discovered the Columbia. Other experienced navigators, like Vancouver and Meares, passed along the coast and declared that there were breakers all the way, which was true, for the Columbia presents a wide, dangerous bar, with a line of surf, hazardous to-day after thousands of dollars have been spent on improving the entrance. Even on a very calm and beautiful morning in summer when I approached this bar on a steamship from the sea, the breakers looked threatening. It remained for an American trading captain, Robert Gray, to solve the question. He had assured Vancouver that there was a river at the place, but that wise and admirable explorer made a mistake this time and refused to agree with Gray who thereupon sailed to the bar and put his ship through a passage in the breakers, discovered from the masthead, into the mouth of the beautiful river, in 1792, naming the stream after his vessel which was the first to enter. This was a fortunate circumstance for the United States as this discovery of the mouth of the River of the West became a strong point in the dispute over the ownership of Oregon.

The United States, rather unexpectedly, in 1803, acquired all the French rights to Louisiana, the bounds of which, like the bounds at that time of all other western American territory, were unformulated and vague. Having this vast tract for our own it was imperative to ascertain its character; imperative to explain and defend, against the little minds, the spending of seven times the sum originally appropriated for the purchase of the mouth of the Mississippi.

[1] *Travels throughout the Interior Parts of North America*, 1778.

The government thereupon sent Captains Lewis and Clark on their memorable and now well-known quest.[1] Their line of travel was up the Missouri, across the mountains to the head of the Columbia, down that river to its mouth, and back by practically the same route. This was in 1805–1806. This exploration formed another link in our claims to the Oregon country.

Up to 1769 California Alta, though definitely claimed by the Spaniards, at least as far as Cape Mendocino, had been neglected, but in that year Captain Portola and Padre Junipero (Miguel José) Serra were sent from California Baja (Peninsular California) to establish settlements in the form of missions in this Far North. The first footing was at San Diego. From that point mission after mission was founded, the natives brought to prayer and song, albeit by the lash and sword to a great extent, and the most unique era in the history of California was begun. Eighteen establishments were soon in operation, before the opening of the nineteenth century in fact, while three others were later constructed. Gardens, vineyards, acres of grain-fields, thousands of head of sheep, cattle, and horses, surrounded each settlement, and the wonderful fertility of the Californian soil was quickly demonstrated.

Between these missions and those of the New Mexican region there was no road of communication. In order to find one, two priests of the Franciscan Order, which had charge of all missions, Padre Escalante and Padre Domínguez, left Santa Fé, July 29, 1776, for Monterey. They proceeded northward into what is now the State of Colorado, possibly with the intention of passing the great barrier of the canyons of the Colorado River at the crossing afterwards named for Captain Gunnison, the same point where the "Spanish Trail"

[1] *The Original Journals of Lewis and Clark*, by Reuben Gold Thwaites, Dodd, Mead & Co.; *The Trail of Lewis and Clark*, by Olin D. Wheeler, Putnams; *History of the Expedition under Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*, Biddle edition reprint by Barnes and Co., New York.

Little Zion Valley, Virgin River

Character of the region of South-Western Utah, through which Frémont passed on his return in 1844

The Great Temple Butte, Virgin River, Southern Utah

Altitude 7500 feet above sea

established in 1830 by the American, William Wolfskill, went over, about on latitude 39°; but if this was so they failed to strike the proper route, and continued north, against the remonstrances of some Utes they met, to the next possible crossing, Wonsits Valley, where they put themselves on the western bank of what they called the Rio Buenaventura in about latitude 40° 15′. Going down to the Rio de San Cosme (Uinta branch) a short distance above its mouth, they followed its valley westward to the crest of the Wasatch barrier, and descended into the Great Basin at Utah Lake, which they called Nuestra de la Merced and which Escalante says the natives called Timpanogo.

They heard of Salt Lake but did not go there. Instead they turned south, travelled along the western flanks of the Wasatch, crossing the Santa Isabel River (Sevier), till they came to the neighbourhood of the present town of St. George on the Virgin River. Discovering now that they could not reach Monterey before the winter should set in, they decided to make their way back to Sante Fé. The interminable line of the canyons of the Colorado, a part of which Escalante had examined the previous year from the Moki towns, again interposed, and it was only after many weary efforts, and the killing of some of their horses for food, that they at last came to the Ute Ford—the existence of which Escalante probably knew—the only practicable crossing for horses between Gunnison Crossing and the foot of the Grand Canyon, a distance of several hundred miles. This ford, situated about where the Colorado River is cut by latitude 37°, used for centuries by the Utes, Navajos, and other natives, ever since Escalante's crossing, has been called chiefly *El Vado de los Padres*, or, in English, The Crossing of the Fathers. There was a good trail from there to the Moki Towns, and once at the latter place their troubles were over; plenty of food could be obtained and the trails were plain.[1]

[1] S. V. Escalante y F. A. Domínguez, *Diario . . . para descubrir el Camino desde . . . Santa Fé del Nuevo Mexico al de Monterey*, Docs. para la Historia

In this great circuit through the mountains, Escalante had traversed an enormous territory, where, beyond Grand River, it is probable no white man had ever been before. Nearly three quarters of a century later, Frémont crossed the trail of these padres several times, and, on the return from California in 1844, he went over it from about Mountain Meadows (*Vegas de Santa Clara*) to Utah Lake and the Uinta Valley.

Santa Fé, by the year 1800, had developed considerably and had a population of more than 4000, while, in the surrounding valleys, thousands of Spaniards, Mexicans, and Puebloans were cultivating crops mainly by irrigation; and they held large flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle and horses. They sorely needed manufactured articles from the United States. The road to Mexico was long and difficult, duties were high, and nothing much was manufactured in Mexico anyway. Several Americans, discovering this situation, inaugurated some small trading operations, as early as 1802, which proved profitable. The New Mexican people welcomed the traders because they could satisfy their wants; the governor, who was also the government, welcomed them because by means of exorbitant duties and confiscations on pretexts he grew rich. The trade increased rapidly. The boundary was not yet outlined and Lieutenant Pike came out for the government in 1806, ostensibly to find where Red River might be. Instead of looking for Red River, however, he struck north, from where Pueblo now stands, into the mountains in winter, with his party absolutely unprepared for such conditions, and, floundering around in a blind sort of way, losing men and horses in needless exposure, he turned back and succeeded in finding a Spanish trail, which he followed down into San Luis Valley, where, on the west side of the Arkansas, in

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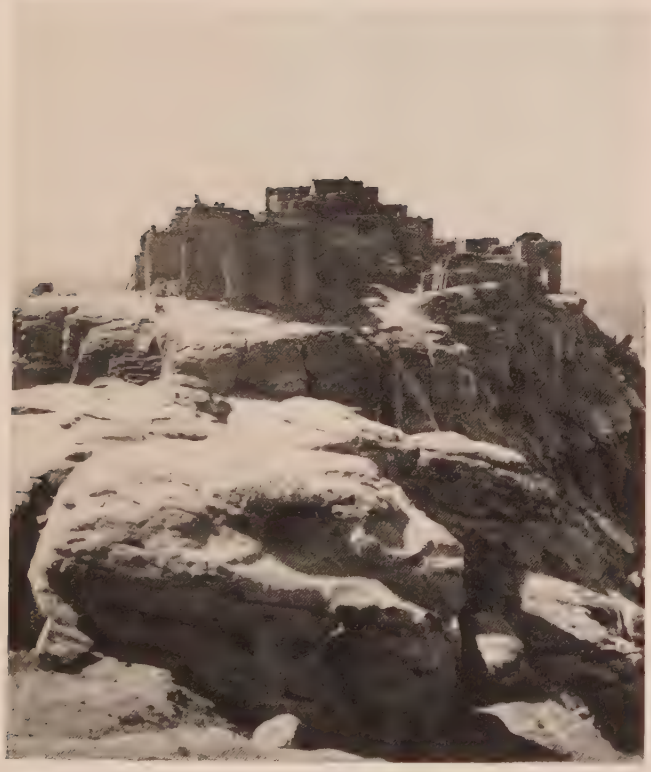
de Méjico, ser. ii., tom i., pp. 375–558. Also see Appendix R, p. 489, J. H. Simpson's Report; English translation of Escalante's diary from Santa Fé to the Moki Towns, by Philip Harry. Also see H. H. Bancroft's *History of the Pacific States*, vol. xxv., p. 35.



Wolpi, Arizona

This is one of the Moki villages. It is on the end of a narrow mesa or promontory of cliff about seven hundred feet above the valley. Two other villages occupy the same mesa behind the point of view.
Photograph by Ben Wittick, Albuquerque, N. M.

what was indisputably Spanish territory, in January, 1807, he built a fort! He was soon captured by the Spanish troops, taken to Santa Fé and Chihuahua, and later released. What Pike was trying to do has remained a mystery ever since. It has been surmised that he was following out some fillibustering plan of the arch-traitor, General Wilkinson, whose son was with him and was sent back with messages before the entrance into the mountains.

In Santa Fé Pike met the trapper Pursley, who told of the finding of gold on the head of the Platte. Copper and silver were already being worked in New Mexico, harbingers of the enormous output of the future. But gold did not attract much so long as there were plenty of beaver. Large enterprises in the beaver pelt trade were being conducted at this time by Manuel Lisa, a Spaniard, and by some Frenchmen, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, mainly along the upper Missouri, from which the trappers pushed out in every direction where beaver ground might be discovered. It was these men who first explored the wilderness, but, as they seldom put anything on record, their work in this direction counted for little, except when they met a Bonneville, a Frémont, or some other man of scientific training. Colter, one of the Lewis and Clark men, who remained in the mountains, described the geyser basin of the Yellowstone, but not much was thought about it till many years after when a government expedition published an account. In 1811 Henry, one of Lisa's company, went over to the head of the Snake and there built a trading-post. Larger operators now gradually stepped into the fur business. In 1810, John Jacob Astor organised the Pacific Fur Company and the next year a party arrived by sea to erect a fort at the mouth of the Columbia. The British North-west Company did all they could to prevent the Pacific Fur Company from building or trading, but, notwithstanding this, the fort was completed, and was named Astoria, and the company began its operations.

Meanwhile Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, one of the partners, made an overland journey westward to reach Astoria, from St. Louis, following a new route from a little below the Mandan towns. Instead of continuing up the Missouri, as was usual, he bore to the left and struck across the country. The party traversed the Wind River range, went down Snake River, and finally, after many difficulties, arrived at Astoria, February 15, 1812. From here young Robert Stuart, the end of the following July, was sent back east with advices for Mr. Astor. He kept a diary all the way, a typewritten copy of which is in the New York Public Library. With him were Ramsay Crooks and several others of the outward party. From the upper Snake River a more southerly course was picked out, and this led them through the afterwards noted South Pass, the first white men on record to go over it.

In the War of 1812 Astoria was taken by the British[1] but it was restored to the owners at the conclusion of peace, the British contending, however, in the subsequent controversy, that it was simply a restoration of private property that had encroached on British territory, and had no bearing on the ownership of Oregon. The treaty of Ghent called for a return of "all territory, places, and possessions whatsoever," except some specified on the Atlantic coast. No agreement on boundary could be reached, the United States adhering to its claim on the whole Oregon country on the basis of purchase, discovery, exploration, and settlement. A joint occupancy was the outcome, arranged for a term of ten years from October 20, 1818. During this time the North-west Company, and its successor the Hudson Bay Company, made it impossible for Americans to trade or trap in the country, and they opposed settlement. It

[1] The managers of the Pacific Fur Company, learning that the United States and Great Britain had gone to war, sold Astoria to the British North-west Company, so that when a British man-of-war came to capture the post it was already in British hands. It was renamed Fort George.

was not until Dr. John McLoughlin[1] was sent as chief factor in 1824 that these conditions began to change. While at first he refused to aid Americans, he at length more and more favoured them, and in the end he became a naturalised citizen.

The British declared that the line of the 49th parallel, agreed on in 1818 as the boundary between Louisiana and the British possessions, and which the United States proposed as the Oregon boundary, halted at the watershed, or divide, of the Rocky Mountains, and that all beyond this to the west was British property down to the 42d parallel. They were finally willing to run the 49th parallel to the Columbia and then draw the line down that river to the ocean, but this was rejected by the Americans,[2] who now contended for 54° 40′, the southern limit agreed on with Russia for her territory.

In 1819 the boundary between Louisiana and Spain (later Mexico) had been definitely determined by treaty which was not ratified till 1821. The line was the west bank of the Sabine to the 32d parallel, thence north to Red River, thence on this river to the 100th meridian and north to the Arkansas, thence on the south bank of the Arkansas to its source and from that point north to 42°, which was the line to the Pacific. Benton, who was one of the few men of that time with a clear appreciation of the future value to the United States of all these far western lands, was exasperated because the government in its eagerness to settle the Florida matter relinquished the French Louisiana claim to as far as the Rio Grande.[3] Mexico limited Texas to the Nueces, which had been the boundary of it as a Mexican state. On what ground Texas made the claim to the Rio Grande is impossible to discover. With

[1] See *Dr. John McLoughlin, The Father of Oregon*, by Frederick V. Holman.

[2] See Greenhow's *History of California* for data on these points.

[3] In 1835 Jackson offered to buy northern California, including the Bay of San Francisco.

apparently as much justice, Texas might have claimed the Colorado as its western limit, or the Pacific. In the case of the Oregon dispute, Benton maintained that the treaty of Utrecht between France (and hence the United States as the successor) and Great Britain having established the parallel of 49° as the line between Louisiana and British territory westward indefinitely, the same 49th parallel must be the northern boundary of Oregon indefinitely to the Pacific. If this were true, we never had any claim whatever to "54° 40′ or fight."

After the 1819 understanding with Spain on the southern boundary of Louisiana, Calhoun brought about an expedition, under Major Long, to reconnoitre the Great Plains. This party wintered 1819–20 near Council Bluffs after having ascended the Missouri in the *Western Engineer*, a

small stern-wheeler seventy-five feet long, thirteen feet beam, and drew nineteen inches light. She was intended to impress the Indians with awe, and there is no doubt she did so. On her bow, running from her keelson forward, was the escape pipe, made in imitation of a huge serpent, painted black, and its mouth and tongue painted a fiery red. The steam escaped from the mouth of the serpent.

This remarkable craft was one of four designed for this expedition. One sank early in the ascent, two were sent back from near Atchison, and the *Western Engineer* alone was able to proceed, though her highest speed up stream was three miles an hour, and she reached Fort Lisa, about five miles below Council Bluffs, the first steamboat to get so far. Here the river was abandoned and Long conducted his small party across the Plains on horseback, along the Platte, to the mountains. One striking peak they concluded was "Pike's highest peak"; that is, the peak which Pike specially described but did not succeed in reaching. Long named it James's Peak, after his botanist, who was the first white man on record to reach its summit, but it received

The Third Barrier
Character of the Colorado River
Photograph by Julius T. Stone, 1909

the name of Pike nevertheless. Long's party was divided and part returned down the Arkansas, while the other went in search of Red River, found the Canadian, and after much wandering got back on the Arkansas. The story of this expedition was told by James and is very readable.[1] Neither Pike nor Long had secured any data beyond the Rocky Mountain barrier, nor were their results on the Plains very scientific. But at any rate something more was known of the Plains; and of the rivers which were to form the southern boundary of Louisiana.

As to boundaries in general, the situation by 1841 was that the United States had undisputed claim to less than one half the territory west of the Mississippi, while Great Britain held a shaky grip on Oregon; Mexico saw California Alta tugging at its moorings, with New Mexico in much the same condition; and Texas already was steering with her own crew by 1837. Russia had an uncertain foot on California at Ross and Bodega Bay; France was standing by at "attention," ready to take advantage of any opportunity, but as ever considerate of the interests of the United States. Great Britain was quietly inaugurating a series of steady movements designed to land San Francisco Bay and northward, if not the whole of California Alta,[2] in her net; yet, so far as California was concerned, the British evidently had no plan of directly opposing the United States in the game; she intended to grasp it if the chance offered, hence it was imperative that the United States should be on the *qui vive* and

[1] *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, performed in the years 1819–1820 . . . under command of Major S. H. Long of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, compiled from the notes of Major Long, Mr. T. Say, and other gentlemen of the party, by Edwin James, botanist and geologist to the expedition. London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1823, 3 vols.

[2] The designation California Alta is continually used instead of Upper California because the latter term has frequently been employed to designate the part of California north of San Francisco Bay, whereas California Alta means all north of San Diego, as distinguished from California Baja, or Peninsular California.

secure the first foothold. If Great Britain, by purchase, by negotiation, or by Hudson Bay Company occupation, ever got a hold on part of California, the other nations could immediately be counted out. So, too, if the United States could get a grip, nothing but war could oust her; the situation was, in fact, simmering down to a question of tactics, and the several interested nations seem to have been fully aware of it. This explains why our flag was so speedily run up at Monterey at the merest rumour of war between Mexico and the United States, and then taken down again when the rumour was not verified.

With the exception of Senators Linn and Benton and one or two other men from the West, and Frémont, through his intercourse with them and the ideas he had gained while out with Nicollet, there were few who understood the conditions or who cared much about the far-off "useless" lands of the Pacific Coast. The Oregon question for years aroused little real interest. In 1828 our hold on it seemed to be growing weaker through the apathy of the government and the people, and the hostility of the Hudson Bay Company. The only part of Oregon fit to occupy, declared Mr. McDuffie in Congress, was a little strip along the coast less than one hundred miles wide; for agricultural purposes all the rest was not worth a pinch of snuff. Many people, too, were opposed to any further extension of territory, believing it to be "dangerous to the integrity of the Union." Some members of Congress asserted that no one could ever represent that far-off region in Washington for the reason that too long a time would be required to make the dangerous journey. As to the western bounds of Louisiana, France seems never to have admitted any limit at the Rocky Mountains.[1]

[1] On this subject consult: *The Boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase*, by Louis Houck, St. Louis, 1901; *The Louisiana Purchase*, etc., by Binger Hermann, Washington, 1898; *Documents relating to the Purchase and Exploration of Louisiana*, by William Dunbar, Boston, 1904; *History of the Louisiana Purchase*, by James K. Hosmer, N. Y., 1902; "Les Limites au Nord-Ouest de la Louisiane cédée par la France aux Etats Unis en 1803," F. Romanet

The Santa Fé trade rapidly developed. In 1824 Augustus Storrs was sent to investigate. He made his report to Senator Benton and that indefatigable legislator introduced a bill for the survey of the route, which was accordingly accomplished in 1825–26 by J. C. Brown, the work being done by chain and compass, corrected by latitude and longitude observations. In 1824 waggons, to some extent, took the place of pack-trains, and after that the waggons predominated. Thousands of tons of merchandise were transported over the 775 miles of this dangerous road, the eastern terminus of which was at three points, Westport, the present Kansas City, Independence, and Franklin. These were the starting-places, also, for many of the trappers and fur-traders, who were numerous and who were exceedingly skilful and capable. Some became famous, like Jim Bridger, Maxwell, Fitzpatrick, and Kit Carson, while others of as great or greater accomplishments, like Jedediah Smith, Ashley, Sublette, and the Patties, were less well known. Thomas L. Smith, better known as "Peg-leg" Smith because of a wooden leg he wore, due to the loss of the original member through an arrow-shot, was occupied largely in stealing horses. He operated between the various Indian tribes commonly, joining the raid of one tribe or another as might suit his plans, but his greatest hauls were made in California. He would send spies ahead, and then at the given hour would sweep through the country driving the horses before him. General William H. Ashley was one of the most distinguished of all the traders and was a man of wealth and culture. He came to the mountains in 1824 and took a wheeled cannon through South Pass in 1827. Waggons were first pulled through this pass, which is low and easy—low with relation to the surroundings though 8000 feet above sea—by Captain Bonneville in 1832. Bonne-

de Caillaud in *Eighth Report International Congress of Geographers*, 1904. Hermann was mainly responsible for placing the limit in recent times, on maps, at the Rocky Mountains.

ville, on leave of absence from the army, lived the life of a fur-trader and enjoyed it so much that he neglected to return when his leave was up, or to send any word of his intentions. He visited Salt Lake and planned for its exploration but Walker, who was to do the work, went instead on across, by way of the Humboldt, to California.[1] The discovery of the lake is awarded to Jim Bridger, though it has been said that Étienne Provost was there in 1820, four years earlier. Several trappers circumnavigated it in search of beaver streams in 1826. Bonneville attempted to carry his operations into the Oregon region, but the hostility of the Hudson Bay Company compelled him to desist, as it had every other American. The Californians were also opposed to American trappers, and they instigated attacks by Indians against them. The officials of New Mexico imposed on American trappers and traders, and, as in California, they were frequently thrown into prison, where they were badly treated. The elder Pattie died in a California prison in 1828, while his son was confined near by and not permitted to go to him.

The same year that Bonneville went out, 1832, the noted American author, Washington Irving, started on a trip across the plains from Fort Gibson as far as the Cross Timbers and proceeded to within a day's march of the Texas boundary.[2] Another traveller on the plains this year was Nathaniel Wyeth, who passed Bonneville *en route*, and continued on to Fort Vancouver, where he turned round and went back to Boston to complete the organisation of his fishing and trading company. The Oregon Trail now began to rival the Santa Fé Trail. In spite of the fact that there were excellent farming lands to be had in the Dakota region where Nicollet and Frémont had explored, the Pacific Coast seemed to be a greater attraction. Wyeth, notwithstanding admirable skill and organisation, was undermined

[1] Irving's *Bonneville*.

[2] "A Tour of the Prairies," Irving in *Crayon Miscellany*. Putnams.

by the Hudson Bay Company and was obliged to give up and return. In 1833, Maximilian of Wied, Catlin, the afterwards famous artist, and various American and English sportsmen travelled the plains and the mountains. Dr. Parker and Marcus Whitman went to Oregon in 1836 and they succeeded in establishing a mission there. It was the first real foothold of the Americans in that region.

The Texans, the next year, achieved their independence. The matter of placing their boundary at the Rio Grande had not been settled, but they heard that the New Mexicans were dissatisfied with conditions and would be glad to join the Texans against the New Mexican government, which was simply the governor, Armijo, a man of incredible barbarity. Accordingly, the Texan Santa Fé expedition was organised in 1841, largely a mercantile venture, with a powerful guard.

The conquest was expected to be accomplished pleasantly and briefly; and then for trade! But the expedition, not knowing the way, arrived in the Rio Grande valley in a separated and demoralised condition. Deception then gave Armijo the upper hand, whereupon some of the Texans were slaughtered like dogs, and the rest marched in the hardest manner to El Paso, where better treatment was met with, and the rest of the journey to the City of Mexico was humane.[1]

California Alta, during this time, was receiving settlers from the United States, and a trade similar to the Santa Fé had grown to considerable proportions, but it was conducted by sea. The Mexican government was disturbed; the Californians themselves affiliated with the foreigners and all were highly independent; the country began steadily to drift from its slender moorings. In 1836, the following resolution was passed by a newly formed state, of which J. B. Alvarado was made civil governor: "The said Cali-

[1] *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition*, by George Wilkins Kendall. Two vols. N. Y., 1844. Harpers.

fornia shall be erected into a free and governing state, establishing a congress which shall dictate all the particulars of the country and elect the other supreme powers necessary."

Captain Wilkes of the United States Navy, who conducted some explorations in California Alta in 1841, says: "Americans from the United States are beginning to settle in this part of the country (Sacramento Valley) and it will not be long before it becomes in some respects an American colony."[1] Sir George Simpson said: "The only doubt is whether California is to fall to the British or Americans." William Glen Rae, in California for the Hudson Bay Company, declared, when intoxicated, that it had "cost 75,000 pounds to drive certain American traders out of Oregon, and that they meant to drive the Yankees from California if it took a million pounds to do it."

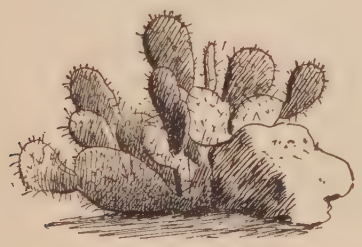
About this time a French traveller in that region, Eugène Duflot de Mofras, says: "England and the United States flatter themselves alike with the idea of taking California from Mexico. It is, moreover, evident to us that California will belong to whatever nation chooses to send there a man-of-war and 200 men."[2] That is to say, the nation that should make the first aggressive move would be the one which would gain the prize of California; but which could make such a move, hostile to Mexico? which would dare to make fast the hawser of the drifting State? The difficulty was to find a proper excuse, not only with regard to Mexico, the nominal owner, but Great Britain and the United States with regard to each other. They had no intention of becoming involved in a war over this question; in fact the British people, as a whole, seem never on any occasion to have desired a rupture with the American contingent.

The Oregon question was not yet settled; the British and Americans were coming almost to the firing-line on that.

[1] Wilkes, vol. v., p. 191.

[2] *Explorations*, ii., pp. 61–71.

Naturally if war came over the Oregon boundary, Great Britain would immediately take steps to oust the Americans from California. Diplomatically, the whole situation was tense. Senator Benton was in close touch with the Washington authorities; he was one of them, and no man, probably, knew all the diplomatic intricacies of the time better than he. He knew also that it was important to acquire as speedily as possible an understanding of the western region and everything connected with it. He was, therefore, profoundly interested in the several Frémont expeditions; he was, in fact, the prime instigator of them; expeditions almost entirely through territory which was either absolutely foreign, where no American expedition had a right to go, where in fact they had been expressly forbidden to go, or in territory that was disputed. The expeditions were, evidently, a part of a great game—the game of California. The question was, "Who wins California?" War with Mexico was expected. Texas and Mexico were nominally at war; it required only the annexation of Texas to the United States, already urged, to bring about war against that country; indeed Mexico intimated that annexation of Texas to the United States would be considered a declaration of war. With this review of conditions and prospects, we will follow the fortunes of the young explorer, so admirably equipped for the work before him.



CHAPTER III

TO ST. VRAIN'S AND FORT LARAMIE

The Lure of Free Land—Frémont's First Expedition—Kit Carson, Paragon of Mountaineers—Outfitting at Chouteau's—On the Oregon Trail—Numberless Buffalo—Dividing the Party at the Forks of the Platte—The Mountains Sighted—Wild Horses and Wild Arapaho Warriors—At Chabonard's Camp—Jim Beckwourth, the Mulatto Scout—Fort Platte—Arrival at Fort Laramie.

THE productiveness of land is the basis of all prosperity and all valuation. People having no ownership in land in one locality will always gravitate towards the region where there is opportunity to secure it. Dangers and hardships will be cheerfully discounted for the possible prize of owning a home. Exactly as in the earlier days the barrier of the Alleghanies was overcome for the free lands of the Mississippi Valley, now the several barriers of the Western Wilderness were to be vanquished, beginning with those on the Oregon Trail. "Nobody," declared Benton, "will go three thousand miles to settle a new country unless he gets land by it." Therefore he favoured a liberal homestead law for the Oregon country, and finally, in conjunction with Senator Linn, another enthusiast on the Far West, he succeeded in getting through Congress a land bill which gave every actual settler one mile square (640 acres), with other benefits. This was a chance for fortune that people were eager to take advantage of.

The Spaniards and Mexicans made grants of land too, for various reasons. Texas was settled by Americans because of one of these made to Austin; and the Mexican

St. Charles, Missouri

First capital of the State of Missouri and an important place in the early days of the West. It was founded in 1769
From Meyer's *Universum*

possessions were plastered with them, all vague and uncertain as to boundaries, and often as to legality. When exact methods came in and attempts were made to locate the lines, they were found to wobble widely over miles of valley, stream, and mountain, and consequently they developed into sources of enmity, litigation, and even armed resistance. Through this very cause Frémont in later years was doomed to serious disappointment and harsh criticism. The results of the American system were very different; valuable homes were supplied to millions. Societies were formed for systematic emigration to Oregon; everything indicated by the word "Oregon" was as seductive as the warm sunsets which spread beyond it. The annual caravan to Santa Fé was merely a trading venture, but the annual caravan which by 1841 was established over the Oregon Trail meant settlement of the Pacific Coast by Americans, and permanent prosperity to an enormous number. In this year of 1842, at least one thousand emigrants from the Eastern States went overland to Oregon by way of Missouri, with their wives, their children, and their flocks. "To check these bold adventurers was the object of the government," says Benton, "to encourage them the object of some western members of Congress on whom (in conjunction with the people) the task of saving the Columbia evidently devolved."[1]

The reason the government desired to check this tide was that, as the boundary question was still absolutely unsettled, it was not deemed wise to encourage emigration in that direction, especially as there was an abundance of free land of good quality much nearer home, in the region surveyed by Nicollet, to say nothing of the district south and south-east; but Benton and his colleagues, in which of course Frémont coincided, believed the surest way to secure Oregon and bring the dispute to an end was to rush in as large a representation of Americans as possible, and accord-

[1] *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., p. 70.

ingly this method prevailed, with a result that appears fully to justify it.

Between the Missouri at about Kansas City, then Westport Landing, where at this time the emigrants started on the long overland journey, and the lower valley of the Columbia, there were absolutely no settlements or settlers. The only establishments in that line were the scattered forts of the fur companies, and an occasional trapper's cabin and "rendezvous" some of which will be met with in the course of this narrative. These places were occupied in trading with the Indians, one of the chief articles of barter being alcohol many times diluted. When the natives became tipsy from this beverage it was easy to secure their furs for very small sums, or for a few extra drinks. This practice on the part of the traders often produced trouble for the emigrant or explorer, and was one cause of the Indians' distrust of whites. Another was the opposition of the Mexicans and of the British which, at least indirectly, instilled a spirit of enmity in the Indians of their respective localities, against Americans.

His first expedition, Frémont states, was intended to be

auxiliary and in aid to the emigration to the lower Columbia; it was to indicate and describe the line of travel, and the best positions for military posts, and to describe and fix in position the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains at which this initial expedition was to terminate. At this time the South Pass, at the head of the Platte River, was the one most available for our emigration and already used.[1]

This was written years afterward; there is no suggestion in Frémont's report that it was considered an "initial" expedition

[1] "The winter of 1842–43 had been used to make out the maps and write the report. In this I was secretary and amanuensis, and had full knowledge of the large scope and national importance of these journeys—a knowledge as yet strictly confined to the few carrying out their aim. Even to the Secretary of War, and to Mr. Frémont's immediate commander, the Colonel of the Topographical Engineers, they were only geographical surveys to determine lines of travel."—Mrs. Frémont, *Century Magazine*, p. 768, vol. xix., N.S.

at the time, but it undoubtedly was so considered by Benton and Frémont themselves; and Frémont states that the real object of the expedition was avowed at a later period.

It would not have been proper to mention such intentions in a government report, especially as the future expeditions must first be authorised before they could be undertaken, and, even with so powerful an influence in their favour as that of Senator Benton, they were uncertain. For, among other difficulties, it was a question just how far Mexico, already greatly irritated, would tolerate trespassing on her soil; and whether the Oregon country might not soon be exclusively British. Frémont remarks, "I felt I was being drawn into the current of important political events; the object of this expedition was not merely a survey; beyond that was its bearing on the holding of our territory on the Pacific; and the contingencies it involved were large." The object, as set forth in the orders, however, was simply to explore the country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, "but its real purpose" and objects were known only to the "circle of its friends," indicating that Benton, Linn, Frémont, and the others of that select circle in their consultations on the subject of territorial acquisitions in the Far West, which included California, had worked out a more or less definite plan, later carried out as occasion permitted. It will be well for the reader to bear in mind these points for future consideration as the story unfolds, particularly when Gillespie so romantically overtakes Frémont, on his third expedition, in the California mountains, direct from the admonitions of the chief personage of this close circle, Senator Benton, one of the wisest, most far-sighted and patriotic men in Washington.

Probably the first object was, as stated, Oregon settlement, in the endeavour to decide, by occupation of actual residents, the dispute in favour of the United States. Tyler, who was then President, was opposed to any encouragement of emigration to the Columbia Valley, while the "circle

of friends" saw in it the only successful issue of our claims.

At length the first Frémont expedition was authorised; but it was officially so limited in distance that Frémont quickly applied for an extension to South Pass, which was granted, and the orders accordingly changed to read to that effect. Although, as we have seen, several expeditions had crossed and recrossed the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains, besides numberless wandering trappers and traders; emigrants were annually striking out for Oregon; the Santa Fé trail was heavily travelled; yet the wilderness was largely a wilderness still, and it was an extensive wilderness. The way was wild, rough, and unmarked; not a bridge existed. To mention the non-existence of bridges may seem trivial to the average reader, but I know from my own experience that this lack was often a serious drawback.

May 2, 1842, Lieutenant Frémont, now twenty-nine years of age, said good-bye to his bride of six months in Washington, and set out for St. Louis, where he arrived in twenty days and remained several weeks outfitting.

The city of St. Louis then, and for many years afterward, was the metropolis of the West, the chief place for preparing for western travel. Chicago was little more than a large village, Kansas City and Omaha did not exist, while New Orleans, the other established city, was too far out of the line of travel. From St. Louis, Frémont went up the Missouri, on one of the steamboats described in an earlier chapter, and on this boat he was fortunate in meeting Kit Carson, the "paragon of mountaineers," according to Ruxton.[1] Carson, whose home was in Taos, New Mexico, was then thirty-three years of age.

> Small in stature and slenderly limbed, but with muscles of wire [to quote Ruxton again] with a fair complexion and quiet, intelligent features, to look at Kit none would suppose that

[1] *Life in the Far West*, by George Frederick Ruxton. 1849.

the mild-looking being before him was an incarnate devil in Indian fighting and had raised more hair from the head of Redskins than any other two men in the western country, and yet thirty winters had scarcely planted a line or furrow on his clean-shaven face. He was first in every quality which constitutes excellence in a mountaineer, whether of indomitable courage or perfect indifference to death or danger, with an iron frame capable of withstanding hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fatigue, and hardships of every kind; of wonderful presence of mind and endless resources in time of peril; with the instinct of an animal and the moral courage of a man who was "taller" for his inches than Kit Carson.

Carson suggested going with Frémont, and the Lieutenant engaged him in place of another mountaineer previously considered, named Drips. This was the beginning of the lifelong warm friendship between Frémont and Carson. The destination was the trading-post of Cyprian Chouteau, seven miles back from the river, at "Chouteau's Landing" (Westport Landing, Kansas City now), where they disembarked. Cyprian Chouteau was one of the famous family of that name, so long identified with early fur-trading, Pierre and Auguste having been among the first in the country, and also among the first to befriend the lonely Nicollet on his arrival. It will be remembered that, through Nicollet, Frémont became well acquainted with many of the people of St. Louis, including the Chouteaus, and now, above all, he had the added prestige of being son-in-law to the great Senator from the growing State of Missouri, whose home was here.

For twenty days they remained finishing their preparations for the trip, and Frémont began immediately those conscientious observations which so markedly distinguish his expeditions from preceding ones. He made, always, frequent observations for latitude and longitude, and he gives the figures and the method in his report. He states that those for longitude on the first expedition were thrown

too far west by an occultation which he later found to be unreliable, and he refers all, therefore, to the series taken on the next expedition.[1] The latitudes are generally near the mark, but the longitudes, not only of the first but also of the second expedition, are faulty. Nor do the recorded longitudes of the first expedition agree with those marked on his map, a photographic copy of which I have before me. On this, for example, the meridian of 105° runs east of Fort Laramie by about twenty minutes (evidently a draughtsman's error), whereas the record in the itinerary gives the position of Laramie as 104° 47′ 43″, while the correct longitude is around 104° 33′. In following the track of the expeditions, therefore, I shall, frequently, omit his figures and, as far as possible, identify the trails by places marked on ordinary maps of to-day. His barometrical observations were compared with observations by Dr. Engleman in St. Louis, as a base station, and generally they are not far out of the way. In order to get the most nearly accurate results with any form of barometer, its readings must be synchronous with those of two or more "base" barometers; that is, barometers situated at some point not far off where the height above the level of the sea is absolutely known—a railway track, for example. Of course, at the time of these expeditions of Frémont a satisfactory barometer base was an impossible thing to secure anywhere west of St. Louis; there were no railways; no place had been established exactly as to altitude. St. Louis was a long way off, too long to give the best results. Notwithstanding the difficulties and the often disadvantageous conditions, Fré-

[1] "In the course of the last exploration it became evident that the longitudes established during the campaign of 1842 were collectively thrown too far to westward by the occultation of a^2 Arietis, to which they had been referred by the chronometer. This occultation took place at the bright limb of the moon, which experience has recently shown to be deserving of little comparative confidence."—*Report*, p. 321. St. Vrain's fort on the first expedition is made 105° 12′ 12″, on the second 105° 12′ 23″. The actual longitude is about 104° 51′.

John Charles Frémont
1813–1890

From an old print. Probably about as he looked at the time of his first expeditions to the Far West

mont's observations were admirable in their conscientiousness and they were sufficient to form the basis of some (for the circumstances) very good maps. His astronomical errors seem to have been constant, and, when this is the case, reduction to correctness, when the error is once calculated, is a simple matter.

On this 1842, or "First," expedition, he had twenty-one men, chiefly creoles and Canadian *voyageurs* who had been in the employ of the fur companies and were consequently familiar with the life. Lucien Maxwell was hunter; Carson, as noted, was guide, and a German of most admirable qualities, Charles Preuss, afterwards very well known in the geographical field, was topographer. Frémont had first met Preuss when the latter was in financial distress, and had befriended him, which brought about a "long friendly comradeship." "The little service which I was able to render him," says Frémont, "he amply repaid by years of faithful and valuable service as topographer on my journeys, during which his even temper and patient endurance of hardship earned my warm regard." There were also in the company two boys, one a son of Colonel Brant of St. Louis, nineteen years of age, and Frémont's brother-in-law, Randolph Benton, twelve years old. These youngsters furnished much life and amusement to the daily routine, as youngsters are apt to do.

The baggage was transported in carts, as in the Nicollet surveys, each being drawn by two mules, in charge of one of the Frenchmen. All the other men were mounted. Some loose horses and four oxen completed the outfit that began its march across the Plains on the 10th of June, 1842, which was Friday, "a circumstance," remarks the Lieutenant, "which our men did not fail to remember and recall during the hardships and vexations of the ensuing journey." They were soon out on the open prairie, where they saw Indians riding by, and, in the distance, that characteristic element of the early days, a column of smoke sweeping away on the

wind before a prairie fire. Even down to the latter "70's," when I lived in Kansas for a time, the prairie fire was a common feature, and I returned home one evening to find that a fire had swept across my ranch, happily, thanks to the efforts of my man and neighbours, without doing any great amount of damage. The Frémont party in about ten miles struck the Santa Fé Trail, and followed it a short distance before turning northward. We shall find the noted explorer on this famous road again, another year, when he is returning from the Rocky Mountains. It did not then matter much which direction one travelled, for, except that there were deeply worn waggon-ruts to follow in some places as guides, the region might be graphically described in the language of a gentleman whom I met who wished to give a picture of the way to the Black Hills, as being "all road!" Having myself once navigated a "prairie schooner," without any companion but my horses, for a couple of hundred miles over this expansive highway, I can appreciate the exactness of this description.

On a small stream they made an early camp, in the manner they adopted for safety. They usually stopped an hour or two before sunset in order that the proper arrangements might be made, which were, to form a corral or yard of the carts, to pitch the tents, hopple the horses to feed, and start the supper going. At dusk the animals had their hopples removed and were driven in to be picketed near by, ready to be placed inside the waggon-corral if necessary. Hoppling, or "hobbling" as it is usually pronounced in the West, consists in putting a sort of leather bracelet on the animal's forelegs just below the fetlock, which prevents walking, except with very small steps, and if the beast tries to run he must gallop in a three-legged way that is not easy; though I have seen fractious horses make astonishingly good time in spite of this handicap. The hopple, of course, is not necessarily of leather all nicely prepared with uniting ring and buckles for convenience; it may be anything that will

hold. Rope hopples are common, and I have used my bridle-reins when nothing else was available. The "picketing" consisted in tying the horse, by a rope or lasso twenty or thirty feet long, to a stake or "picket" driven firmly into the ground. This enables the animal to nibble at the grass, if there is any, and yet holds him at hand for protection. A horse that is merely hoppled may travel two or three miles in a night; some of them will do it apparently out of pure revenge; mules certainly will. Frémont established a guard going on duty every night at eight o'clock, consisting of three men, relieved every two hours. In travelling through a far, new country, especially when infested with a population that declines to admit the God-given rights of invaders to paramount authority, and is likely to appropriate all one's live stock at a single swoop, the danger of dangers is being left without a mount. Walking and carrying baggage many long miles is not to be anticipated with pleasure. The western mountaineers, therefore, made sure of their hold on their stock, and caravans that were cautious and ready were not often attacked.

At dawn Frémont's rising call was sounded, and by seven o'clock the company was under way. The march was broken at noon by a halt of an hour or two for dinner and rest, and then continued till the usual time fixed for making night camp. This is practically the routine followed by every party in the field, at all periods of western exploration. A little west of the present city of Topeka they forded the Kansas River at a regular crossing, June 14, 1842. The river was "up," as they say, and when this condition prevails the passage from one side to the other is usually attended with difficulty and some danger. The adjoining bottom lands are frequently under water at the same time, and one approaches the main channel with no certain idea of just where the deep water commences. Frémont had provided an india-rubber boat, the first ever used in such work he thought, with air-tight compartments. It was built in

New York and was twenty feet long and five feet wide. Much of the outfit was successfully transported on this craft when it was capsized through the timidity of the steersman. And here it may be stated that timidity is one of the most objectional qualities in an explorer; in this case it proved to have brought no very serious disaster, as almost all the goods were recovered, except some sugar and a bag of coffee. The coffee was the only thing they specially mourned, and most of those who have "roughed it" and enjoyed the bracing effects of a cup of hot coffee in camp on a frosty morning or after a wet and wearisome day, will sympathise with them. Coffee gives the tired strong man a new grip on vigour, and is consequently useful and comforting, but by no means essential. Some very rugged Mormons I have known would never touch coffee, tea, tobacco, or alcohol of any kind, because it was against their creed, and they seemed to fare quite as well in camp, and on the march, as other men who believed these things, except the alcohol, necessary. Few experienced men have any faith in whiskey as an aid to withstanding fatigue or exposure, or in any way beneficial for daily use, and beer, even if it could be had, is even more objectionable, especially in a hot country.[1]

The party proceeded on its way north-westerly across what are now Jackson, Pottawatomie, Marshall, and the north-eastern corner of Washington counties, Kansas, into Nebraska. Frémont paid close attention to the nature of the soil, the quantity of timber (here existing only in the river bottoms), the grasses, plants, flowers, geology, altitude, temperature, etc., and he recorded his observations in his note-books.

Some Indians visited the camp at the ford, one of whom spoke French with "as much facility and as little embarrassment" as any of Frémont's own men, French as all of them were. In these days French and Spanish were common in

[1] As good a stimulant probably as any to be found is hot pea soup, made from the German "*erbsenwurst*" preparation.

the Far West. These Indians were farmers too. They brought butter, vegetables, pumpkins, onions, beans, and lettuce to trade. From a half-breed twenty or thirty pounds of coffee were obtained, and from others a cow and calf in exchange for a yoke of oxen. It may be wondered why a cow and calf were better than a yoke of oxen, but it seems that cream was desired for the coffee! This was a luxury that did not last a great while. The best campaigners never scorn a luxury that comes their way, and when they are "down to bedrock," or worse, in the matter of provisions, they take it with equal nonchalance. The most difficult man to please in camp is the man who has had little at home.

On the 20th of June they crossed the Big Vermilion and after a day's march arrived at the Big Blue, "a clear handsome stream running with a rapid current." A party of emigrants for Oregon were a few weeks ahead of them on this road; their camps and other traces served somewhat to break the monotony of the way, for it is a fact that in a lonely, unfrequented region even the discarded tin cans of another party acquire an interest. At night they often had hosts of mosquitoes, the worst pest of outdoor life, for it is impossible to cope with them. Besides the discomfort of their attacks, we now know that they are responsible for the dissemination of malaria. It was reported that there was much sickness in the party ahead, which was a large one, sixty-four men and many women and children, with all their household goods, and numbers of fine cattle. Besides speculating on the fortunes of the pioneers, there was occasionally other excitement, as, for example, when one of the men rushed in to proclaim a war party of twenty-seven Indians near at hand. Carson swiftly investigated. "Mounted on a fine horse," says Frémont, "without a saddle, and scouring bareheaded over the prairies, Kit was one of the finest pictures of a horseman I have ever seen." The twenty-seven Indians proved to be six elk which ran away as fast as they could!

Crossing on June 26th from the Blue to the Nebraska or Platte River, they camped on the bank about twenty miles below the head of Grand Island, the next day proceeding to near the head of the island, about where the 99th meridian cuts the river, approximately opposite, and a trifle south-east of, the present city of Kearney. Frémont made the longitude 99° 05′ 24″ and latitude 40° 39′ 32″, which seem to be about correct. On the 28th there was another alarm. Someone was discovered approaching. All was made ready, while the men galloped boldly to the attack. It was only a party of trappers who, sixty days before, had started from Fort Laramie to navigate the Platte with barges laden with furs destined for St. Louis. They hoped to come down on the annual "rise." It was not so well understood then that while the Platte is magnificent as to length, and ranks high in width, it is absolutely lacking in the third dimension, without which navigation, even for the craft of these trappers, drawing only nine inches of water, is impossible.[1] They had cached their furs and come on afoot. That evening three real Indians came, two men and a small boy, Cheyennes from the far land in the West at the head of the South Platte. Their excursion into this region had been for the bold purpose of appropriating some of the surplus horses of the Pawnees, though they were armed only with bows and long spears. They were returning disappointed; they had no horses except the poor beasts they rode; but they still had their scalps. Frémont kindly fed them, and without an invitation they attached themselves to his party, as it was going their way.

The trappers had reported large herds of buffalo a short distance in advance, which was joyful news, and on the last day of June Frémont came to them. The arrival in the midst of buffalo was always an important event on the plains. It meant abundance of food, which in turn meant

[1] It must be told, in justice to the Platte, that the year 1842 was a year of phenomenal drought.

Indians Hunting the Bison

The bow-and-arrow was effective in such hunts, the arrow penetrating with great force
From a water-colour painting by C. M. Russell

great jollity and solid comfort. Frémont's picture of this occasion is so well drawn that I must quote it:

> In the sight of such a mass of life, the traveller feels a strange emotion of grandeur. We had heard from a distance a dull and confused murmuring, and, when we came in view of their dark masses, there was not one among us who did not feel his heart beat quicker. It was the early part of the day, when the herds are feeding; and everywhere they were in motion. Here and there a huge old bull was rolling in the grass, and clouds of dust rose in the air from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight. Indians and buffalo make the poetry and life of the prairie, and our camp was full of their exhilaration. In place of the quiet monotony of the march, relieved only by the cracking of the whip, and an "avance donc! enfant de garce!" shouts and songs resounded from every part of the line, and our evening camp was always the commencement of a feast, which terminated only with our departure on the following morning. At any time of the night might be seen pieces of the most delicate and choicest meat, roasting *en appolas*, on sticks around the fire, and the guard were never without company. With pleasant weather and no enemy to fear, an abundance of the most excellent meat, and no scarcity of bread or tobacco, they were enjoying the oasis of a *voyageur's* life.[1]

Then followed some exciting moments in the chase, the buffalo being so close together in the stampede that Frémont's horse almost leaped upon them at one time. They secured plenty of meat and continued on up the Platte, on the south side of the river, the very route to-day, on the other side, of the Union Pacific Railway, the first line across the continent. At night they camped a mile and a half above the lower end of Brady's Island. The island received its name from a tragedy of several years before: the killing by his partner of a man of that name. Some bones dug out of a grave by the wolves and lying about, Frémont took to be those of the unfortunate. Unless a grave is

[1] Memoirs, p. 86.

covered with heavy stones or timbers, the wolves are sure to exhume the contents, and when one comes upon an empty hole in a wilderness, surrounded by the bleaching rib, leg, and arm bones, and perhaps the skull, a grewsome and forlorn sensation is imparted to the surroundings.

Wolves are always following the buffalo and the explorers had concerts of their yelps at night and saw them sitting near in the mornings waiting for the camp scraps. One or two prairie wolves, or coyotes[1] as they are called, can make so much noise in the night, or daytime either, that one would think at least a hundred were there. They are harmless to men. There might be circumstances where they would be dangerous but I have never heard of any in the Far West. The timber wolf is bolder, though neither is he ordinarily dangerous, yet his deep-throated bay, sounding in some lonely valley on the winter air, has a thrill in it, especially when the sunset fades and the dark banks of jagged pines merge into the night.

Frémont now made directly, in the afternoon of July 2d, for the mouth of the South Platte, which they forded with as great rapidity as possible to prevent sinking in the quicksands. The total breadth, immediately below the junction, was 5350 feet. They forded only the South Platte with two channels, 450 feet for one and 2250 for the other, and by six o'clock the entire company was comfortably established on the point of land formed by the junction. Frémont gives the latitude as 41° 04′ 47″ and longitude 100° 49′ 43″, with an altitude of 2700 feet above sea. The town of North Platte now stands very near this place and the Union Pacific Railway determination of its altitude is 2800 feet, proving that Frémont's barometrical observations were often not far wrong; indeed were remarkably good under all the circumstances. His other observations at this point

[1] Properly pronounced *koi-oh'-tay*, not *Ky-oht'* as is so frequently the custom now. Instead of a spelling reform, we need a pronunciation and enunciation reform.

were also approximately correct. The next day after caching (burying in the ground) a barrel of salt pork which they meant to pick up on the return, and which they invited the Cheyennes to view as it was being cached, so that they, not liking pork, would not return and dig it up, the entire party proceeded up the left bank[1] of the South Platte upon which they were, and camped in twenty-five miles, where there was so little wood they were obliged to utilise the *bois de vache* or "buffalo chips," the dry excrement of the buffalo, which burns with a hot smouldering fire, and also a pungent smoke that is not entirely agreeable.

The next day was the Fourth of July, dear to all American hearts, whether at home or abroad, and it was accordingly celebrated by a morning salute, while a ration of fire-water was served to the men. More buffalo were encountered on the march this day on up the South Platte.

In a short time they surrounded us on every side, extending for several miles in the rear, and forward as far as the eye could reach; leaving around us, as we advanced, an open space of only two or three hundred yards. This movement of the buffalo indicated to us the presence of Indians on the North fork.

An early stop was made and a feast to celebrate the day prepared, consisting of macaroni soup, dishes of choice buffalo meat, even fruit cake and preserves from St. Louis, reserved for the occasion. Doubtless the creoles and voyageurs were filled with more enthusiasm for the American day *after* the feast and additional grog, the latter proving too much for the Cheyenne lad who, "to the great delight of his elders, made himself extremely drunk."

While the examination of the North Platte was the chief object of this expedition, Frémont concluded to here divide his party, and himself continue on up the South Platte to

[1] The terms right, and left, bank, as applied to a river, are always used in one sense—always from up stream looking down, no matter in which direction the traveller may be moving.

St. Vrain's Fort, a trading-post almost at the foot of Long's Peak belonging to the well-known traders, Ceran St. Vrain, and the Bent brothers, and on the 5th he started with Maxwell, Bernier, Ayot, and his favourite Basil Lajeunesse, as well as the too companionable Cheyennes, whose home was this way. This small contingent was fitted out to travel light, in order to travel fast. It had one extra led horse, and a pack mule which was supposed to be laden with provisions. This supposition proved to be a delusion, for, when camp was made at night and some buffalo meat was cooking on sticks around the fire, and the pack was opened for flour and other necessaries of the camp cuisine, nothing was discovered but a little coffee. Whose fault this oversight was Frémont does not say, therefore it must be laid to him; it was his duty to know whether his outfit was properly provisioned. Not wishing to subject Preuss to the hardship of this scouting trip, Frémont sent him back to the other party, which, under the leadership of Clement Lambert, was making its way along the North Platte where now a branch of the Union Pacific Railway runs. Carson seems to have continued with the main party also, though no mention is made of him. Frémont went forward amidst herds of buffalo. On the 7th of July a small drove of wild horses was sighted and one of the Cheyennes, mounted on Frémont's spare horse, tried to capture the leader but did not succeed. The temperature at noon was 103° F.

On the 8th some dark objects on the hills which they thought were buffalo proved to be Indians, and in a few minutes two or three hundred, naked to the breechcloth, showing they were a war party, were bearing rapidly down to intercept the explorers, who were making an effort to reach some timber for defence; but the timber proved to be on the opposite side of the river. As the Indians rode up, the whites were about to open fire, when Maxwell recognised the leader and shouted in their tongue, "You 're a fool, damn you! Don't you know me?" The Indian swerved and

passed, and as Frémont came over to him he held out his hand, with the other striking his breast and exclaiming, "Arapaho!" The Arapahos are Algonquin and the Cheyennes are also Algonquin. The Arapahos were disappointed; they were at peace with the Cheyennes and no scalps were possible; in fact relatives of these Cheyennes were with the main body. They were looking for Pawnees, but instead now devoted their attention to a herd of buffalo, while the Frémont party, after watching the fray for an hour, proceeded toward the village, which they found consisted of 125 lodges, twenty being Cheyenne. Frémont was invited to the tepee of the head chief, where a peace pipe was passed around and a large wooden dish of buffalo meat placed before the visitor. Other chiefs came, and it was asked what Frémont was doing in the country. He explained his purpose and they were satisfied. Neither he nor any of his men was now in danger of molestation from anyone connected with this band. Property would be entirely safe even without a guard, so long as it was understood whose it was. Maxwell was well known to this tribe, and one of his friends gave him a bundle of dried buffalo meat when the party rode away to their camp about three miles on up the river.

The next morning they got their first glimpse of the Rocky Mountains, about sixty miles away; the faint, snowy summit of Long's Peak, called by the Frenchmen "*Les Deux Oreilles*." Sighting distant mountains on a vast plain has the same thrill in it that sighting distant land has at sea. It is a thing that occurs frequently but it always has a charm, and on this occasion it was specially interesting, as it was Frémont's first view of the mountains he was to see so much of in future, and in which he was to experience some trying days. About eight o'clock they met several persons on horseback, one of whom proved to be the noted mulatto scout and trapper Jim Beckwourth, whom Frémont, after the custom of the day, calls "Beckwith," for it seemed impossible for the frontiersmen to understand that it was

spelled Beckwourth. Later, when this remarkable character dictated his now well-known narrative, some resented the spelling of his name in the, to them, new way, assuming that it was done from pride, not recognising the fact that Beckwith is quite as stylish and honourable a name as Beckwourth.[1] Beckwourth was in search of horses belonging to a near-by camp, presided over by another well-known frontiersman, Chabonard, which Frémont reached that night, and rested there beneath some mighty cottonwoods. Magnificent trees were some of these great old cottonwoods of the West.

Chabonard, with French hospitality, immediately sent one of his men to gather mint, with which he "concocted a very good julep," says Frémont, and we may be sure that Frémont's life with Hassler had taught him what a good julep was. Boiled buffalo tongue, and coffee "with sugar," formed the balance of the repast with which the cordial Chabonard welcomed them. "The people in his employ," remarks Frémont, "were generally Spaniards, and among them I saw a young Spanish woman from Taos, whom I found to be Beckwith's wife." Beckwourth, it may be mentioned, had enjoyed many wives, mainly Indian. This one, born "Señorita Louise Sandeville," he had married this same year in San Fernandez de Taos, New Mexico, where he had operated a "store" to trade with Indians. He had then come north, and before the end of the year established himself at what is now Pueblo, Colorado, but in 1844 he went on to Los Angeles, California. He makes no note of meeting Frémont at this time but later speaks of wishing to join him in the conquest of the Golden State, saying, "Colonel Frémont was at that juncture approaching from Oregon with a force, if combined with the Americans resident there [in California], sufficient to conquer the whole country."[2] As

[1] *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth.* Written from his own dictation by T. D. Bonner. New York, Harpers, 1856. A new edition was printed in recent years.

[2] Beckwourth Autobiography, p. 474.

Waggon Camp at Dawn

Drawn by R. Swain Gifford

Mr. Gifford, who died in 1905, was in the Far West in 1870 and accompanied the Hayden Survey party as a guest from Cheyenne to Fort Bridger. Dr. Hayden, in his report says though a guest he "rendered us most efficient aid, and by his genial nature endeared himself to all."

Beckwourth had then ranged California from north to south for some time, and also knew thoroughly all western conditions, his testimony as to this adequacy of Frémont's forces is important. But Beckwourth says he could not effect a juncture with Frémont. Instead he made his escape from the country, taking with him, by the way, 1800 "stray" horses found roaming on the ranches. This was probably the time that the redoubtable Pegleg Smith refers to. "On this grand raid he [Pegleg] had six white men and about one hundred and fifty Indians, according to Rubideaux, Jim Beckwourth having preceded the party as a spy, according to Colonel Williams. . . . Jim spied out the land and when Pegleg appeared in the Cajon Pass was ready to counsel and guide him."[1] When Beckwourth got back to his "fort" at Pueblo, Colorado, he found his wife, Louise, married again, deceived by a false communication. She "offered herself back," but Beckwourth declined the offer.

On the 10th of July, Frémont and his small party continued to the trading-post of St. Vrain, an adobe structure, which stood not far from the present town of Evans, Colorado, somewhat farther up stream, on the right, or south, bank of the South Platte, and a mile below the mouth of St. Vrain's Creek. Marcellus (?) St. Vrain received them with great hospitality and assisted them as far as possible. Hospitality, of course, was then the rule and for many years after, in the West, even down to the present time, away from the cities. This post was in direct touch with New Mexico; Taos and Santa Fé being the centres of supply and communication. Several Spaniards came in searching for employment, and Frémont engaged one, "who proved to be an active, laborious man and was of very considerable service." Frémont regretted that he could not go into the mountains now looming so near, but his orders would not

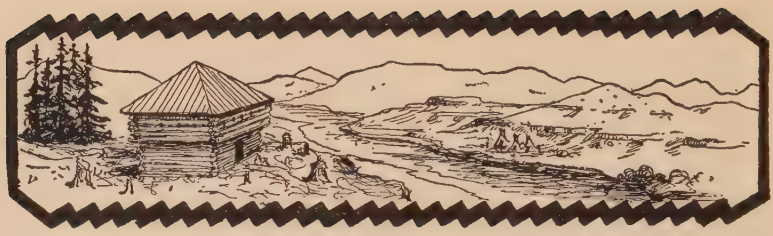
[1] *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, Major Horace Bell, p. 283. Pegleg Smith "died in a drunken fit about 1868 in Calaveras Co., California."—Hobbs, *Wild Life*, p. 46.

permit of delay at this point. At any rate he saw quite enough of them in the future. Columns of smoke rolled up in the south, where the forest had been on fire several months, and we know now that these forest fires annually destroyed immense amounts of timber before and since. A prairie fire, compared with a forest fire, is like the flame of a match compared with a blast furnace. Everybody who has been in the western mountains is familiar with that almost constant column of black smoke in summer; everybody knows that millions of dollars worth of timber are annually lost by this cause, yet in the more than forty years that my attention has been held by the West, no intelligent effort has ever been made to prevent or even to control, these destructive fires.

Frémont estimated here what he mentions as a "tolerably correct longitude" of 105° 12′ 12″ but it is actually nearer 104° 51′. The altitude he made 5400 feet. The Geological Survey gives it 5120 feet. On the 12th of July they struck out for Fort Laramie, 125 miles to the north across the plains, where they were to meet the other part of the expedition which all this time was following the North Platte westward. With the added power of two horses and three good mules, the new Spaniard, and the guest places of the Cheyennes taken by two Spaniards who wished to go to Laramie, they proceeded. Provisions were scarce at St. Vrain's because of the non-arrival of an expected supply train from Taos, and they were obliged to rely on the game to be shot. A few pounds of coffee were obtained and they had dried meat sufficient for one day. The valley of the Platte resembled a garden "glorious with wild flowers." At noon they were on the Câche à la Poudre, ten miles from St. Vrain's and just a year later, in July, 1843, Frémont was here again on his westward way, and he then went up the Câche à la Poudre to reach Salt Lake. Nothing of any special interest occurred on the way to Fort Laramie. The course was nearly north; N. N. E. and then N. N. W.

for five days. They met with plenty of buffalo, and there was no lack of water, and on the evening of July 15th a trading-post, called Fort Platte, came in view on the point of land at the junction of the Laramie and the North Platte; an unfinished adobe affair belonging to Sybille, Adams, and Company. A few hundred yards beyond Fort Platte was Fort Laramie of the American Fur Company, sometimes then called Fort John. It stood on the left bank about twenty-five feet above the river, with an imposing military air derived from its "lofty walls, whitewashed and picketed, with the large bastions at the angles."

Mr. Boudeau, in charge, received the travellers with a hospitality that was all the more complete from the fact that Frémont bore letters from the company in St. Louis for him. The other branch of the expedition was encamped not far away, having arrived, in good condition the day before yesterday, the 13th. As they had come along the main Oregon Trail they knew more about present conditions to the westward than the smaller party, and Frémont was suddenly confronted with several difficulties in the way of further advance toward the goal of this expedition.



CHAPTER IV

TO SOUTH PASS AND FRÉMONT'S PEAK

Meeting Jim Bridger—Unwelcome News—Bissonette the Interpreter—A Feast of Dog—Structure of Fort Laramie—A Warning Ignored—Drought, Grasshoppers and Anxiety—Mending a Barometer—Snow-Capped Mountains and South Pass—The Second Barrier Surmounted and The Highest Summit Attained.

WHILE Frémont had been ascending the South Platte, over the same route Major Long followed in 1820, his other party proceeded, according to his direction, up the North Platte over the Oregon Trail. On the third day about the time for camping, the usual monotony of travel on the plains was suddenly broken by the alarm of "Indians"! There was much immediate confusion and preparations were made for defence; but, in a few moments, the enemy were discovered to be a returning party of trappers and traders under the leadership of the famous mountaineer Jim Bridger. The day being so nearly spent the new comers turned back on the trail with the Frémont party and all encamped together. Bridger took supper with the Frémont men, and during the course of it, related some recent experiences that very much disturbed their serenity.

In the first place the Sioux had been growing more hostile and with bands of Cheyennes and Gros Ventres, were out on the war-path which at present was the Oregon Trail farther westward particularly at a point called Red Buttes, in the very path indeed, of this Frémont expedition. Bridger and his men were just coming from that country where they

had, the previous year, August, 1841, a fierce encounter with the Indians. The battle took place at or near Fraeb's Post, to the south-westward of Fort Laramie about 150 miles, on the headwaters of Yampa River, on St. Vrain's Fork, near the Elk Head Mountains (approximately lat. 40° 45′, long. 107° 30′) and the leader of the party of sixty men, Henry Fraeb, was killed, as well as four of his companions.[1] They had in turn killed ten of the Sioux. Bridger had avoided Red Buttes by cutting across to the south of them through the Laramie Mountains, then called the Black Hills, but the Frémont expedition in executing their orders would necessarily march exactly past the place and the company was excited by the prospect of falling into an Indian fight. Preuss was disgusted with their attitude and remarks: "I expected to find every one prepared for occurrences of this nature; but to my great surprise I found on the contrary that this news had thrown them all into the greatest consternation, and on every side I heard them exclaim, '*Il n'y aura pas de vie pour nous.*'" (This is no life for us.) If sixty hardy mountain men had come off so badly in the clash with the Sioux, the voyageurs probably reasoned that their own chances would be slim. Many of them wanted to turn back at once, but, urged by Lambert and several others, they consented to continue, at least as far as Fort Laramie, and here they were, for the time being, perfectly safe. Bridger had offered to go with the expedition as far as the head of the Sweetwater, that is to South Pass, but there was no one present with power to make an agreement with him. His services would have been valuable, yet as they had those of Kit Carson, an equally good frontiersman, they were not necessary.

[1] Henry Fraeb is mentioned in the Frémont Report as "Frapp," the usual pronunciation of the time. Fraeb was a brave, skilful, and experienced mountaineer and had been in this field some fifteen years. Frémont states that the battle took place on "Snake" River but this means "Little" Snake River, a tributary of the Yampa in the region indicated. Frémont passes that way in 1844, going up St. Vrain's Fork for a number of miles.

Bridger had met at Laramie, the Oregon caravan, which had preceded Frémont all the way, and he had no news of an encouraging nature for them either.[1] Besides the prospect of trouble with the Sioux and other tribes, the drought and the grasshoppers had combined to destroy the grass along the road; and, without grass, it was not possible for their teams to haul the heavy waggons. They concluded, therefore, to change to pack animals at this point, and accordingly sold their cattle and waggons, the cattle being nearly unable to walk because of the worn condition of their hoofs.[2] The prices they got for their waggons, etc., was what they had paid for them. The goods they bought, by exchange, were excessively high; coffee and sugar at a dollar a pound, for example. The horses they received were in poor condition, and Frémont says they died before the emigrants reached the mountains. And thus, even while en route, did the rose-colour turn to grey for these sanguine travellers; but it was a story that was to be written over and over, and still over again, often with far darker colours, in the immediate years to come.

The emigrants met with one piece of luck. Returning with Bridger was Thomas Fitzpatrick, his close associate, and one of the most expert and experienced of all the noted mountaineers. He was, in fact, the peer of both Carson and Bridger; wise in directing and protecting a party from the attacks of the hostiles. He consented to go on with these emigrants as far as Fort Hall (near the present town of Blackfoot on Snake River, Idaho), the Hudson Bay post originally

[1] Bridger himself was by no means discouraged. He went the following year, 1843, to Black's Fork of Green River and there set up his "fort" for assisting and trading with emigrants as well as Indians. The chief factor of this establishment was a blacksmith shop. The place became a United States post later. Chittenden considers the founding of Fort Bridger, 1843, as the end of the trapper period.

[2] Waggons had not been taken as yet beyond Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail. Whitman took a two-wheeled vehicle in 1836 as far as Fort Boise on Snake River with great difficulty.

founded by the sanguine and enthusiastic American Wyeth, in 1834, and sold in 1836 because the Hudson Bay Company made it impossible for him to remain in the country as a trader. This party had proceeded on its way about ten days before Frémont's arrival, and they were followed by a band of 350 warriors, evidently with the object of attacking the party if a favourable opportunity arose. About eight hundred lodges were involved in this war movement, most of them at this time near Red Buttes, so Fitzpatrick and his emigrants were between two forces; the great encampment somewhere in advance and the several hundred warriors following. The latter overtook them at Independence Rock, but made no attack, and the next day the whites ran into the central assemblage. During the whole of the following night the fate of the emigrants was debated by the chiefs, Fitzpatrick arguing for them, and his words finally won. They were allowed to continue unmolested.

Carson's judgment was that the Frémont party would almost certainly have trouble as they went forward on the Oregon Trail, and he emphasised his opinion by making his will, a circumstance which instilled increased fear in most of Frémont's followers, some of whom now requested to be discharged. It was, of course, absolutely necessary for Frémont to proceed to South Pass, for it was he, himself, who had caused the original orders to be changed and extended to include that point; and, furthermore, the whole expedition had been concocted by Frémont, Senator Benton, and the "circle," in order to determine exactly what now he would best be able to determine, namely, the best positions for military posts to protect emigrants from the very troubles which the caravan ahead was experiencing. To fail at this point because of the prospect of a skirmish with the enemy would have been to return in ignominy. And there was still another reason for going ahead at all hazard, and this was that Frémont was not a West Point graduate. Benton exclaims: "He did not enter the army through the gate

of West Point and was considered an intrusive officer by the graduates of that institution."[1] The prospective jeers of West Pointers would be sufficient to push him on, had he exhibited any sign of faltering, which he did not. It seems never to have occurred to him for an instant that the expedition for any reason might have to halt short of its objective.

He believed that his principal danger was in being attacked before the Indians should know who he was and his purely scientific object, so like a wise general, he engaged to explain for him, an interpreter named Bissonette, whom he met at Fort Platte, the neighbour fort of Laramie, and Bissonette (Parkman in his *Oregon Trail* writes it Bisonette) advised the engaging of two or three old men from the village of the warriors, which had now arrived at Fort Laramie to await the return of their braves who had gone to harass the emigrants. Bissonette was willing to go as far as Red Buttes and that was as far as the Sioux would dare go, on account of their enemies the Snakes and Crows beyond. Bissonette's scheme was to trade with the returning party of Indians, showing that he, at any rate, was on friendly terms with them. Frémont, concluding that it would be better to have an interpreter for part of the distance than to have none at all, engaged him. Meanwhile Frémont made observations, and plotted up his map as well as he could with the many interruptions by the people of the country, especially when the whole village had arrived. He accepted an invitation to a dog feast and when he reached the place,

the women and children were sitting outside the lodge, and we took our seats on buffalo robes spread around. The dog was in a large pot over the fire, in the middle of the lodge, and immediately on our arrival was dished up in large wooden bowls, one

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years*, p. 478, vol. 2. A good deal has been said about this animosity of the West Point men to Frémont, but is it likely that these men who are specially trained in questions of honour and magnanimity would descend to backbiting of so contemptible a character?

of which was handed to each. The flesh appeared very glutinous with something of the flavour and appearance of mutton.

. . . . . .

Their lodges were pitched near the fort, and our camp was constantly crowded with Indians of all sizes, from morning until night, at which time some of the soldiers generally came to drive them all off to the village. My tent was the only place which they respected. Here only came the chiefs and men of distinction, and generally one of them remained to drive away the women and children. The numerous strange instruments, applied to still stranger uses, excited awe and admiration among them; and those which I used in talking with the sun and stars they looked upon with especial reverence, as mysterious things of great medicine.

The "soldiers" to whom he refers here were the "dog soldiers" who act as policemen of the Indian camp, not American soldiers.[1] Almost every Indian village had a kind of police system, and any resistance to authority was severely punished.

When all was ready to proceed westward on the Oregon Trail, Frémont assembled his men and told them the march would be resumed the next day, that he believed the rumours of trouble had been exaggerated, and that anyway the difficulties were only such as were to be expected. Besides they were well armed, and also had known of the unsettled condition of the country before leaving St. Louis; however, if any wished to back out they were to step forward and receive their discharge. Only one did so, and he went to the upper Missouri the day after the Frémont party started west. The two boys Randolph and Henry, for their safety, were left at the fort, as well as some baggage and field notes.

[1] Beckwourth in his narrative says, p. 249, "By this time my Dog Soldiers, the bravest men in the nation, were surrounding me." He was a chief of the Crows at the time. See article on "Military Societies," *Handbook of American Indians, U. S. Bur. of Ethnology*, Pt. 1, p. 861. Also Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, p. 246, chapter xvi., 1894 edition.

A barometer was set up which Galpin, one of the clerks, consented to read. The longitude was calculated to be 104° 47′ 43″ and the altitude 4470 feet above sea. The true longitude is about 104° 32′ and the altitude 4250 feet.

The establishment on which the Frémont expedition was about to turn their backs, called Fort Laramie (after Joseph Laramé a trapper, drowned here in 1821), and which was chosen afterwards in 1849, as one of the sites for a government military station, was a most important point in the Western country, especially on the Oregon Trail, as Frémont points out in his report. The post originally was on a different site not far away, and was called Fort William, after one of its owners, William Sublette, built in 1834. It was called Fort John, in 1835, after John B. Sarpy. Bridger, Fitzpatrick, and Sublette owned it together, when they sold it in 1836 to the American Fur Company. The fort of Frémont's time was erected in 1836.[1] Frémont described it thus:

the fort, is a quadrangular structure, built of clay, after the fashion of the Mexicans, who are generally employed in building them. The walls are about fifteen feet high, surmounted with a wooden palisade, and form a portion of ranges of houses, which entirely surround a yard of about one hundred and thirty feet square. Every apartment has its door and window,—all, of course, opening on the inside. There are two entrances, opposite each other, and midway the wall, one of which is a large and public entrance; the other smaller and more private—a sort of postern gate. Over the great entrance is a square tower with loopholes, and, like the rest of the work, built of earth. At two of the angles, and diagonally opposite each other, are large square bastions, so arranged as to sweep the four faces of the walls.

[1] A footnote, p. 24 in *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, by Dr. Elliott Coues, says the fort was named after a trapper or voyageur called La Ramie. The fort was first garrisoned by U. S. troops in July, 1849, by Co's C and D., mounted rifles under Major W. F. Sanderson. Larpenteur wrote it La Ramie. It is said La Ramie was killed by the Arapahos.

The great entrance, which was floored, was used in summer as a shady sitting-place, the breezes sweeping through it refreshingly. Francis Parkman, the historian, was here in 1846 and his description in *The Oregon Trail*, is interesting. The room assigned to him by "Bordeaux" (Frémont writes it Boudeau) the *bourgeois*, or superintendent, contained,

a rough bedstead but no bed; two chairs, a chest of drawers, a tin pail to hold water, and a board to cut tobacco upon. A brass crucifix hung on the wall, and close at hand a recent scalp, with hair full a yard long, was suspended from a nail. [This was the best room.] . . . Within, the fort is divided by a partition: on one side is the square area, surrounded by the store-rooms, offices, and apartments of the inmates; on the other is the corral, a narrow place, encompassed by the high clay walls where at night, or in the presence of dangerous Indians, the horses and mules of the fort are crowded for safe keeping. The main entrance has two gates with an arched passage intervening. A little square window, high above the ground, opens laterally from an adjoining chamber into this passage; so that when the inner gate is closed and barred, a person without may still hold communication with those within, through this narrow aperture. . . . This precaution . . . is seldom resorted to at Fort Laramie; where, though men were frequently killed in the neighbourhood, no apprehensions are felt of any general designs of hostility from the Indians.

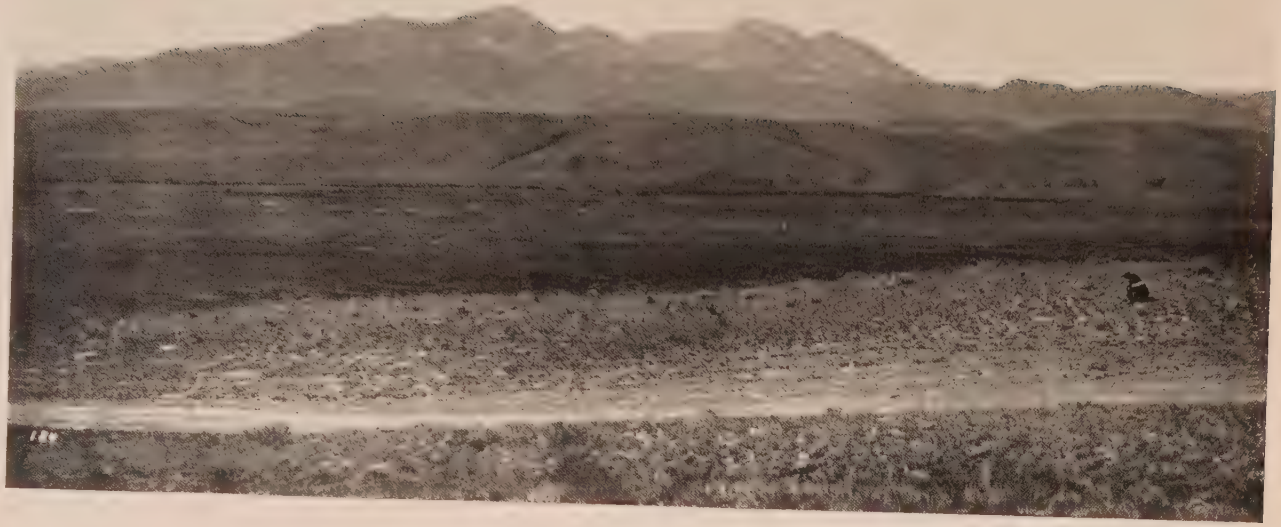
On July 21st, the morning set for the departure from Fort Laramie, on the second stage of this journey, when everything was ready for the march, Frémont and several others went by invitation to the fort for a "stirrup cup," with their friends. As they sat in a cool room quaffing the beverage a number of chiefs suddenly walked unceremoniously in and presented a letter written by Bissonette, to the effect, that the chiefs had just told him to warn Frémont not to start until the war party had returned, as the

chiefs were certain they would fire on the white men. It would be seven or eight days before this party came back. The letter was followed by several brief speeches from the Indians; all warnings not at present to leave the fort. In reply Frémont, through the interpretation of Boudeau, invited two or three of them to accompany him, which they declined to do, and he said further:

> We are few and you are many and may kill us all; but there will be much crying in your villages, for many of your young men will stay behind and forget to return with your warriors from the mountains. Do you think that our great chief will let his soldiers die, and forget to cover their graves? Before the snows melt again, his warriors will sweep away your villages as the fire does the prairie in the autumn.

A young man was finally sent along, or at least was to join the party at the night camp, which he did, on the promise of the gift of a horse. At the same time Bissonette also joined them. Frémont had made a slight detour from the regular way and as it was supposed that Bissonette knew the country, and as he advised going ahead, rather than striking for the road, the party had two or three rough days in the hills. He had not been far from the fort in this direction. When they were on the regular road again, that is on the Oregon Trail, they had no trouble; anybody could follow that. It is a trifle puzzling that Frémont does not more frequently mention Kit Carson at Laramie. He does not quote Carson's opinion on a single decision, at this time, and yet there was no one in the company, or out of it, whose judgment was more valuable. He had had sixteen years experience in the mountains. It may be that Frémont had not yet realised this fact, especially as Carson was only about four years older than himself.

Frémont now noted a decided change in the character of the country; from the vast plains, timberless, dotted with herds of buffalo, with rich grasses, to a rough mountainous,



Red Rock Mountains

Main divide Rocky Mountains. Typical landscape of the region
Photograph by W. H. Jackson, Hayden Survey

sandy region where the artemisia, or sage-brush, predominated as vegetation. "Wherever the beaten track was left, on the hills, and over the river bottoms, the tough, twisted, wiry clumps, rendered the progress of the carts rough and slow. . . . The whole air is strongly impregnated and saturated with the odour of camphor and spirits of turpentine which belongs to this plant." The climate of the Rocky Mountains thus early, had achieved a reputation for curative influence, especially for consumptives, and Frémont thought it may have been due to this aromatic impregnation of the air. The party kept along the North Platte River on the south side and found grass for the animals none too abundant on account of the prolonged drought and the myriads of grasshoppers which rose in clouds as the horses advanced.

They came to a place where the Indians had felled cottonwood trees in order that their horses might browse on the twigs. This is frequently done in winter but seldom was it necessary, at that time, in summer, for the country had not been grazed down; especially not by sheep, which invariably ruin a range for cattle and horses. I have known it to be resorted to in some regions, in recent years, when the winters were long and severe and the snows deep. Frémont adopted the idea now and had his men chop down enough young trees to satisfy his stock for the time being.

On leaving this place there was an alarm of Indians by the scouts ahead and the cavalcade instantly formed for defence in an advantageous position with the carts made into a close barricade, within which the animals were hoppled and picketed. Bissonette and the Indian went to meet the enemy, which proved to be two sulky Sioux from the party which had followed the emigrants. This band had disagreed at Independence Rock on the subject of attacking the white travellers, and because of this had broken up into several bands which were returning to the fort by different routes. These two were of the faction that had advocated

destroying the emigrants, and some of Frémont's men on learning this wanted to shoot them; but, of course, he condemned that inspiration at once. The Sioux said the country ahead was devoid of grass, and that there were no buffalo, which made the prospect for completing the march to South Pass more dubious than ever. About twenty-one miles further, camp was made on the Platte, and that evening six more of the Sioux came in. They said that a large party of their people was in camp, a few miles beyond; not particularly cheerful intelligence, but nevertheless the leader went about his observations as usual and worked out the longitude 104° 59′ 59″ and latitude 42° 39′ 25″. This camp was at the mouth of Labonté Creek, coming in from the south side and very near the site of the present town of Labonté, Wyoming. Labonté was one of the well-known trappers of the fur-hunting period.

The next day was a lucky one, for at night they had fairly good grass, plenty of wood, and, of course, all the water they needed, and saw some buffalo; the last item the most important of all, considering their almost empty larder. The consequence was that on the 25th they made only thirteen miles and halted about where the town of Inez stands, to jerk buffalo meat with the object of getting a supply for ten or fifteen days. The process of "jerking" buffalo meat, beef, or any other, is simple. When it is done properly the meat will keep in a dry climate almost indefinitely. It is usually cut into strips, say about two inches wide and eight or ten long. These are laid on a low scaffold made of cottonwood, or willow, sticks, or are strung on willow withes and then hung across the scaffold. Beneath the scaffold a smoky fire should be, but not always is, kept going. While this is not a necessity in such a climate, it accelerates the jerking or drying process and keeps away the flies.[1] Beef

[1] The air of the Rocky Mountain region and through to the Sierra Nevada, especially the air of the South-western area, is so dry and aseptic that animal matter is soon dessicated. I remember once seeing a horse, that had died on

The Indian Process of " Jerking " Meat on Scaffolds

that becomes "blown" may, if it gets damp, develop larvæ which do not add to the flavour, as I can testify from personal experience. On the North-west coast, and in Alaska, salmon is dried this way without a fire, and I have seen swarms of blow-flies taking advantage of the opportunity.

One misfortune befell here; the breaking of a barometer. Frémont had been so tender with these instruments, desiring to get them through to the mountains, that he was much disappointed; he had but one left. The expedition continued its way on the 26th of July, toward the final goal, with buffalo meat for fifteen days stored in the carts. Every day at noon Frémont took observations of the "sun's meridian altitude"; in fact he was indefatigable in securing all the data possible, whether fortune smiled or frowned. The night of the 26th they halted at the mouth of Deer Creek, not far from the present town of Glenrock, for years a favourite camp-ground for travellers over the Oregon Trail. The stream is still known by the old name. On the 28th of July, twenty-nine miles west of Deer Creek, they came to the place where the Oregon Trail crossed to the north bank, preparatory to the cut-off to the Sweetwater. Here the river was two hundred feet wide in several channels, though the entire width of the bed was from eight to fifteen hundred feet. The depth now was about three feet with a rocky bottom. They had crossed and recrossed the river several times on July 27th looking for grass, for in the low state of water this year it was fordable almost anywhere. When animals have to depend on the grass of the country, considerable search is sometimes required before a proper camping-place is found. Four miles beyond the ford more Indians were met, part of the great assemblage, which they said was dispersed. Most of them had taken a route to the southward of the river for a distance in order to secure grass reporting that not

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the range from starvation in winter, whose carcass had dried *whole*, and someone the following summer had braced it upright against a large sage-brush so that it resembled, a little way off, a live animal.

only was there no grass, but no buffalo in the whole country ahead.

This condition of the country, evidently, had cooled the war ardour of these bands, for Indians never go on the war-path when circumstances are not favourable. Bissonette interpreted the statements of the Sioux and then added, for himself, the urgent advice to turn back from this point. Frémont, however, did not look at the situation in that light. He assembled his men, told them the prospects, asserted his own intention to proceed, but in view of the difficulties that seemed to threaten, said any who wished to could return with Bissonette who had now completed his engagement. Every man of them stood by their leader and Basil Lajeunesse exclaimed, "We 'll eat the mules!" Only one man went back, and Frémont sent him because of a wound in the leg.

The carts were unloaded and secreted in the willows after being dismembered, all unnecessary articles were cached in a pit dug in the ground, and on July 29th at seven in the morning, the train, now a pack-train, that is all the baggage was slung on horses or mules, started on the last lap of this expedition before heading eastward again. Instead of following the Oregon Trail across to the Sweetwater at Independence Rock, Frémont concluded to keep on up the North Platte to the mouth of the Sweetwater and in a few miles came to a noted landmark, the red sandstone escarpments called the Red Buttes, near which the Indians had assembled in their war mood. Luckily good grass was found in the narrow pass through which the river ran at this place and their animals fared well. In about twenty miles they came again into more open country, and camped in Frémont's longitude 106° 54′ 32″ and latitude, 42° 38′. The next day after proceeding on the North Platte twelve miles higher, Carson advised crossing to the Sweetwater. They consequently retraced their path to a grassy island to encamp early and explore the neighbourhood. On the following

day, the last of July they cut across in fifteen miles from their ("Goat") island camp to the Sweetwater and were happy to discover several bands of buffalo. In seven miles the next day, they arrived within a mile of Independence Rock, the most famous landmark on the Oregon Trail.

Many travellers before and since have described this mass of granite, about six hundred and fifty yards long and forty yards high, according to Frémont. It is 838 miles from Kansas City, by the Trail—that wonderful Oregon Trail—which Chittenden in his excellent work on the American Fur Trade declares,

as a highway of travel is the most remarkable known to history.[1] Considering the fact that it originated with the spontaneous use of travellers; that no transit ever located a foot of it; that no level established its grades; that no engineer sought out the fords or built any bridges or surveyed the mountain passes; that there was no grading to speak of nor any attempt at metalling the road bed; and the general good quality of this two thousand miles of highway will seem most extraordinary. Father de Smet who was born in Belgium, the home of good roads, pronounced the Oregon Trail one of the finest highways in the world.

At the time, when we are following Frémont over this historical road it existed as originally developed by the trappers and fur-traders, except that since 1832, Bonneville's time, waggons had been used up to Fort Hall instead of pack trains. Almost every noted man of the early West had been over it or some part of it, and had left his name on the surface of Independence Rock, which received its title probably about 1825, from the circumstance of a party of trappers having celebrated Fourth of July, "Independence Day" alongside of this peculiar outcropping of granite.

[1] See Chittenden's *History of the American Fur Trade*, vol. 1, chapter xxvi, for detailed description of the Oregon Trail; also as before noted, Parkman's book.

Chittenden says it covers an area of more than twenty-seven acres with the highest point 155 feet above the river. Frémont made its position, longitude 107° 56′, latitude 42° 29′ 36″. The locality is marked now by the town of Independence, Wyoming. Five miles beyond the expedition came to another famous landmark, "The Devil's Gate," where the Sweetwater carves a canyon through a granite ridge. Several days' travel up the valley of the Sweetwater, without special incident except cold, rainy weather brought them on August 8th to the summit of the South Pass, the place so much talked of and written about in those days, a pass with none of the characteristics of a mountain pass, with so gradual a rise and so wide a horizon that Frémont at first was uncertain of the actual summit.

The distance from Kansas City he calculated to be 950 miles. Chittenden states the distance to be 947 (in 1901), so that Frémont was very exact in this distance, for the three miles difference with the computation of fifty-nine years later may easily be accounted for by some slight change of route.

In later years Frémont was censured for claiming to be the "discoverer" of South Pass. It was his fate to be condemned and misrepresented very often, on no better ground than this alleged claim. The fact is he never made such a claim, nor even hinted at it. He knew very well that the pass had been discovered and travelled many years before, and everyone else who knew the West at all understood it. There could be no doubt on that point. Chittenden (p. 475) says, "The discovery of the pass is lost in the historic obscurity of this early period," and that "the returning party of Astorians (Robert Stuart's) in 1812 came very near passing through it but were deflected from the route by the fear of following too closely a band of Indians." He further awards the discovery to Étienne Provost, one of the earliest men in the Rocky Mountains, the same *l'homme des montagnes*, who was with Nicollet and Frémont in 1839.

But there seems to be no question that Robert Stuart and his party in October, 1812, while they apparently went a trifle south of the regular Indian trail, actually went through the pass and were the first white men to come over it, and they came from the West; from Astoria. Robert Stuart states in his diary[1] under the entry of Saturday, October 17th, "All these creeks are tributary streams of Spanish River [Green-Colorado] and take their rise in the ridge of mountains to the east which is the main range of the R.M." [Rocky Mountains Wind River Range.] Coming across the heads of these tributaries of Green River eastwardly till the Wind River Range ended "abruptly," part of the time on an Indian trail, undoubtedly the regular trail through South Pass, they continued on it after it turned sharply E. N. E. in a north of east direction for three miles, when they struck south-east, eighteen miles with the Wind River Range on their left and an elevated ridge on the right. They were, therefore, apparently in South Pass and the ridge on the right was probably Table Mountain which is about twenty miles from the north side of the pass. They finally struck directly eastward, after following a watercourse which they thought a "water of the Missouri," because the stream did not seem to be going the way they wished. The Sweetwater swings at first to the northward. They practically paralleled the Sweetwater about twenty miles south, and met the North Platte that distance above the Sweetwater mouth.

Ramsay Crooks, who was one of Stuart's companions on this journey, and a prominent man of the day, was much incensed at the time of Frémont's presidential campaign over statements that Frémont was the "discoverer" of South Pass, and he wrote a letter, dated New York, June 26th, 1846 (printed in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* of July 16th), addressed to Anthony Dudgeon of Detroit,

[1] A typewritten copy, as before noted, is in the New York Public Library. The diary is unpublished except as it, or notes from it, was incorporated in Irving's *Astoria*.

condemning the claim and stating that he and the others of the Stuart party "came through the celebrated South Pass in the month of November, 1812."[1] This seems to establish, in connection with Stuart's diary, that these were the first white men to cross the continental divide by that route.

The Frémont party, still on the travelled Oregon Trail, now went over to the waters of the Pacific; to the Little Sandy, Big Sandy, and other tributaries of Green River which find their source in the beautiful Wind River Range, close on their right. On the evening of the ninth Frémont camped on the "first New Fork" near two isolated hills called Two Buttes. The next morning was frosty and clear. "A lofty snow peak of the mountains is glittering in the first rays of the sun. The scenery becomes hourly more interesting and grand, and the view here is truly magnificent. The mountain peaks are gleaming like silver." The whole surroundings now enthused them all with their beauty and grandeur. It is a region of a myriad lakes, and leaving the valley, Frémont soon comes on one of the larger ones.

We were soon involved in very broken ground, among long ridges covered with fragments of granite. Winding our way up a long ravine, we came unexpectedly in view of a most beautiful lake, set like a gem in the mountains. The sheet of water lay transversely across the direction we had been pursuing; and, descending the steep, rocky ridge, where it was necessary to lead our horses, we followed its banks to the southern extremity. Here a view of the utmost magnificence and grandeur burst upon our eyes. With nothing between us and their feet to lessen the effect of the whole height, a grand bed of snow-capped mountains rose before us, pile upon pile, glowing in the bright light of an August day. Immediately below them lay the lake, between two ridges, covered with dark pines, which swept down from the main chain to the spot where we stood.

[1] Stuart's diary records October 19–20 as the dates on which they rounded the southern end of the Wind River Range.

This lake was about three miles long and was named Mountain Lake. It is the headwater of the third New Fork and the camp made here on the north side near the outlet, was the most western point of Frémont's observations. He made its longitude 110° 08′ 03″ and latitude 42° 49′ 49″. It was named Bernier's Encampment. Here he very ingeniously repaired his barometer, the last one, the glass cistern of which had been broken in crossing a stream. A mercurial barometer is simply a tube of mercury thirty inches high, sealed at one end, with the lower, open end, immersed in a small cup, or cistern, of mercury. The air pressure on the cistern holds the mercury at sea-level at a height, theoretically, of thirty inches. If the tube is taken to an altitude where the air is less dense the mercury falls. The difference enables one versed in barometry to calculate the difference in feet or meters, between one place and the other.

All Frémont needed was a new cistern but he found every glass vial, which he tried to cut, broke. At length he discovered a thin powder horn, a part of which he boiled, stretched, and scraped thin, as it had to be transparent in order to observe a contact pin, to which the cistern mercury must be adjusted by a thumb screw on the flexible bottom, in order to maintain regular conditions. A piece of skin from one of the vials made the flexible bottom, and the whole was put together with glue manufactured from a buffalo. Frémont was eager to make out the altitude of the high peak which he planned to climb, and now he was once more prepared. He was in the very centre of the region where the six great rivers find their tiny beginnings in the mountain rills born of the melting snows. He had intended circumtouring the range by the west end after making the ascent, but lack of provisions and time prevented. Had he done so he would have passed very near to the spot where Bonneville, years before, built his "fort" which was soon abandoned. Frémont, himself, threw up a rough fortification

where he was, and leaving Bernier and a party, to defend it, he took the other men and went at the task of climbing to the highest glittering summit. After some rough work in finding the best path, riding where they could, on the second day, Preuss was slightly injured by a fall, Lambert and Descoteaux, as well as Frémont, were taken sick at an altitude of something over ten thousand feet, and a return was made to a temporary camp. Finally on the third day, August 15th, all went well, and with Preuss, Basil Lajeunesse, Lambert, Janisse and Descoteaux, the goal was attained; a narrow crest about three feet in width, where only one at a time could stand. A ramrod stuck in a crevice served as a staff from which was "unfurled the national flag to wave in the breeze where never flag waved before." This was the flag with an eagle in the field of stars. It is now in the Southwest Museum, Los Angeles.

The barometer was set up, and observations taken, which gave the figures, 13,570 feet as the height above sea. The actual height now more carefully established is 13,730 feet.[1] While they were sitting on the summit rock a solitary honey-bee flew up and lit on the knee of one of the men. Frémont pressed it among the leaves of a book with the flowers collected, and deemed it a circumstance worthy of particular notice. They looked thousands of feet down upon ice fields, upon innumerable lakes, upon the sources of rivers, and around and afar to mountains countless and sublime; but their stay was necessarily brief. From two o'clock to sunset was required to descend to the temporary camp where, in spite of the cold, they slept the sleep of the tired mountaineer, than which no sleep is more grateful or refreshing. Before arriving at the main camp the fated barometer was again broken, this time beyond repair, but it had done its service. "We had climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky mountains" exclaims Frémont, but he had not. Gannett

[1] Hayden made it 13,790.—*U. S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories.*

Peak about five miles to the northward is 13,785, and therefore fifty-five feet higher than Frémont Peak; but farther south in Colorado, there are some *twenty-nine* peaks of the 14,000-foot class.[1]

Mr. John Bigelow, not being a mountain climber himself, in his most excellent Life of Colonel Frémont,[2] written as a campaign document in the Presidential contest of 1856, enthuses over this climb, which was really no very tremendous accomplishment, though one, under the conditions, worthy of commendation. Bigelow says: "The great achievement of this expedition, however, and one of the greatest ever accomplished by any traveller in any age, all the circumstances considered, was the ascent of the Wind River Peak of the Rocky Mountains, the highest peak of that vast chain, and one which was probably never trod before by any mortal foot." Facts are facts and saying a thing is so does not necessarily close the argument. Bonneville was in this region nine years before and he climbed a peak that he thought the highest of the whole range, and when he stood upon the top,

> a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity [writes Washington Irving]. Beneath him the Rocky Mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses; . . . He stood in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world, . . . he had attained that height from which the Blackfoot warrior, after death, first catches a view of the land of souls. . . . The peak commanded the whole of the Wind River chain.

The description of the magnificent view is very much the same as Frémont's; and Bonneville, also, was of the opinion

[1] August 7th, 1878, Mr. A. D. Wilson of the Hayden Survey, reached the summit of Frémont Peak. "We found no signs of anyone having visited this point before; but I am of the opinion that this is the point that Frémont ascended in 1842."

[2] *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Frémont*, by John Bigelow. New York, Derby and Jackson, 1856.

that this was the loftiest point on the North American continent.[1] He found about the same difficulties and took about the same time, two days, to get to the summit from the north-east, that Frémont did from the south-west.

It may have been Gannett Peak, or Mount Helen in between (13,600), which he climbed, or one of the other high points further south, but as Frémont Peak has a greater bulk than any of these and therefore would give the impression of being the most majestic and massive of all, it seems possible that Bonneville in the early part of September, 1833, stood on Frémont Peak and therefore was perhaps the first to climb it.

When Frémont reached his central camp after the ascent, he made immediate preparations for turning the direction of travel homeward in which every man rejoiced. He had glimpsed the wilderness beyond the second great barrier, from the splendid summit of the Wind River Range and he was prepared to confer again with the illustrious senator, and with the "circle" whose hearts were in the acquisition and settlement for the United States of this wonderful country, part of it held so loosely by Mexico and the other part gripped by the Hudson Bay Company for Great Britain.

[1] See Washington Irving's *Bonneville*, chapter xxv.

CHAPTER V

BACK HOME AND FORTH AGAIN

The Episode of the Cross—Navigation under Difficulties—Rocks, Rapids, and Canyons of the Platte—Fort Laramie Again—A Bull-boat on a Sandy River—The Village of the Grand Pawnees—Cowbells and Bellevue—A Boat for the Missouri—Down the River to St. Louis—On to Washington—A Second Expedition Projected—At the Mouth of the Kansas—A Sudden Start—A Mystery.

WHEN Bonneville descended from the great peak of the Wind River Range, which he estimated to be the highest of all, he came down on the eastern side whence he had started. Bonneville was at this time a trapper and fur-trader, not an officer of the army, and in the pursuit of his business he swung around the southern end of the Wind River Mountains, westward through South Pass, into Green River Valley, for many years before and after a favourite point of rendezvous for the fur-hunters. Thence he travelled up the Green to the head of the valley, and crossed over to Wind River. Thus he did, in 1833, what Frémont planned to do in 1842, but was not able to accomplish on account of his lack of supplies, and generally unfavourable conditions. Game was very scarce; the spirits of the men were flagging; and all things considered Frémont concluded not to attempt going farther. Besides, the Crows and the Blackfeet, to the north, were dangerous. They always were, for that matter; that is to say, they were the tribes who most vigorously and successfully resented the encroachments of the whites, and Bonneville played hide and seek with a powerful force of Crows for some time,

but by constant vigilance, their designs were thwarted, and he circumtoured the Wind River Range reaching Green River Valley once more, where he came upon a large band of Shoshones, or Utes, with whom, on friendly terms, were encamped Fitzpatrick and his men.

Fitzpatrick had parted with Bonneville on the Bighorn River some time before and now related his experiences with a strong company of Crow warriors. They succeeded in throwing the wily Fitzpatrick off his guard, and while he was calling by invitation on the chief, a contingent sacked his camp, capturing all his horses.[1] Not only that, but they robbed Fitzpatrick himself on his way back. Yet such was the extraordinary coolness and dominating power of his personality, that he induced the chief by mere eloquence to cause all his horses to be restored, all his rifles likewise, and a portion of the ammunition for each of his men. A few of the horses were again taken by some of the unruly as he was leaving the region, but neither he nor any of his men suffered harm. It is not strange, therefore, that his presence should have served to extricate the party of emigrants, described above, from the Utes, many of whom were his friends and with whom he had often, more or less, affiliated.

Frémont, retracing his outward line of march, left his camp on the Little Sandy and in three hours was in the pass "where the waggon road crosses." In 1812, as previously noted, Robert Stuart came practically to this point before he swung to the south-east, and then to the east. Frémont led his party immediately down to the river where he stopped and took "a meridian observation of the sun" which gave his latitude as 42° 24′ 32″. Continuing eastward along the Oregon Trail, over which they had come out, they arrived on August 22d at Independence Rock, where more astronomical observations were taken, and where this active young

[1] It must not be forgotten that the rival fur companies induced the Indians to obstruct the operations of rivals, and their obstructing often went to the limit of scalping, with the tacit approval of the white abettors.

Chief Running Deer, a Crow
The Crows were defiant at the time of Frémont's operations
Photograph by F. Jay Haynes

officer in a burst of enthusiasm for exploration, and emulation of early predecessors, performed, all unknowingly, one of the eventful acts of his life—a trivial act that was to be used to his disadvantage. He says:

> Here, not unmindful of the custom of early travellers and explorers in our country, I engraved on this rock of the Far West a symbol of the Christian faith. Among the thickly inscribed names, I made on the hard granite the impression of a large cross, which I covered with a black preparation of India-rubber, well calculated to resist the influence of wind and rain. It stands amidst the names of many who have long since found their way to the grave, and for whom the huge rock is a giant gravestone.

Could he have foreseen the trouble in store for him because of this simple, reverential deed, he would have shunned the rock and the cross as things of evil. And it was called Independence Rock, emblem of liberty! But this was only another of those luckless doings of Frémont which his adversaries in later years magnified into crimes. For this heinous cross offence he was charged with being a Catholic, and, in his Presidential campaign of 1856, the circumstance was flaunted violently against him. Dear old Nicollet was a Catholic and Frémont had many friends in this creed, so from that standpoint the cross would have meant nothing unusual to him. Besides his father was one; but he himself was an Episcopalian, following his mother in sectarian matters. It seems quite clear that in putting the cross on this rock he had not the slightest thought of sectarianism.

At this point, as his orders were to survey the Platte, he decided to begin, and take to the Sweetwater in his rubber boat, which was therefore inflated, provisioned, and launched on the stream, manned by Preuss and several others, as well as by Frémont. The Sweetwater is not a large river at any time and now it was at its minimum because of the long drought. After dragging the boat a mile or two over the sands the attempt was seen to be futile

and the boat was packed up, and they went on their way with the pack-train. Arriving at the Platte, chances for navigation on real water appeared better, so another start was made with ten days' provisions and five of the best men, and Preuss the topographer. Carson is not mentioned in this connection, perhaps because his remarks on the undertaking might not bear printing.[1] There seemed to be enough water for the rubber boat which was "light as a duck," and, as they proceeded, everything was favourable until they heard ahead a roar when they approached a canyon through which the river made its passage of some mountains. The stream took a sudden turn "and swept squarely down against one of the walls of the canyon, with great velocity, and so steep a descent that it had to the eye the appearance of an inclined plane." A fall of twenty or more feet had been described to Frémont, and they were on the lookout for a sheer drop; but the fall meant was the general fall of the river at this place—a heavy rapid. Fitzpatrick had told of being wrecked in this canyon eighteen years before when trying to descend with a cargo of furs. Evidently Frémont was unacquainted with the action and velocity of these streams when "canyoned," for he seems rather to have expected to find the sudden fall arranged with a convenient landing by which he could make an easy portage and then go smoothly on. But that is not the way the waters of these rivers come down; they descend at times with a rush, and a dash and a tumble, scattered along over a considerable distance, and to avoid disaster one must be on the watch every instant.

Though appreciating the changed order of things, he was aware that it would be a great task from where he was

[1] Burdett in his *Life of Carson* (p. 175) suggests that Carson had no very high opinion of the courage or good sense of Frémont's voyageurs, and that this was the real reason why he made his will at Fort Laramie before coming farther, feeling that strange things might happen. The Frémont followers were certainly a highly nervous lot.

to get out with their cargo over the cliffs and he decided to continue, bad as the outlook was, down the river and run the canyon. The water swept through with great violence; the boat was nearly swamped; but after running three lively rapids with about a hundred feet of water intervening between them, they came safely out, and breakfasted on the right bank, having been at work since daylight; and it was now eight. In another hour the voyageurs were on the tide once more, and quickly entered the next canyon of the series: "a narrow, dark, chasm in the rock, 300 feet deep at the entrance."[1] They removed most of their clothing and made everything fast. Preuss took the chronometer and tried to walk along the shore with it. Very soon there was no shore. He was then taken in the boat, which was lowered carefully, by means of a fifty foot rope. At length they arrived at a place that is by no means uncommon in canyons of this kind.

To go back was impossible; before us, the cataract was a sheet of foam; and shut up in the chasm by the rocks, which, in some places, seemed almost to meet overhead, the roar of the water was deafening. We pushed off again; but, after making a little distance, the force of the current became too great for the men on shore, and two of them let go the rope. Lajeunesse, the third man, hung on, and was jerked headforemost into the river from a rock about twelve feet high; and down the boat shot like an arrow, Basil following us in the rapid current, and exerting all his strength to keep in mid channel—his head only seen occasionally like a black spot in the white foam.

Lajeunesse was a good swimmer and when the boat was turned into an eddy some distance down, to wait for him, he soon arrived, declaring he had swum half a mile. All now got on the boat and with short paddles for guidance,

[1] Canyons are often spoken of as "dark," but it is only the darkness of the shady side of a street. I have never seen a really *dark* canyon in the daytime, and I have been in hundreds of them, some very narrow and of great depth.

they dashed on. These men must have been skilful boatmen otherwise they would have been wrecked at once, but so successful were they that a Canadian boat song burst from them as they flew swiftly down amidst the rocks; now here, now there. Alas! it was misplaced confidence. Their song, or shout, was broken by sudden and violent contact with a rock. The boat went over. Some of the men could not swim, but, luckily all were presently out on the rocks, while whirling on and on floated the books, boxes, bales, blankets, and the instrument boxes with their valuable freight. The records of the expedition were adrift and vanishing. Quick action was necessary to save them, as well as the other valuables.

Fortunately, there was now a footing on the sides, and the men went down the left, while Lajeunesse, with a paddle, managed to jump on the boat alone and guide her down. All of the registers were recovered except one of Frémont's journals which contained important records, though fortunately many of these were duplicated in the books saved. Almost everything else was lost, and of course all the food.

The main party, by direction of the leader, had gone on to the place named Goat Island on the outward march, and no help was possible from them. They were to wait there if Frémont left no mark in passing. The day was nearing its end, the boat party had no supplies, their arms and ammunition were gone, and the situation was not entirely a pleasant one. It might have been avoided by a preliminary examination or by exploring the river by following its banks on foot through the canyons, but the more uncertain course, with the boat was chosen. They climbed out of the canyon in two parties on opposite sides of the river, Preuss and Frémont on one side and the men on the other, and made their way towards the main camp.[1] Frémont had only one

[1] These canyons appear to be the same which Robert Stuart in October, 1812, described as the Fiery Narrows, on his, the first trip by a white man through this locality.

moccasin. Walking over rough ground in moccasins, unless they be the rawhide-soled variety (and even then there are painful moments, when stones are sharp), is not easy, or at least not comfortable, and with one foot bare, the fragments of rock and the thorns of cacti made the tramp a memorable one for Frémont. Yet they stopped frequently to admire the scenery; Frémont had a sensitive, artistic nature united to his bold nerve and courage. Crossing and recrossing the river, sometimes swimming, sometimes fording, climbing over the ridges, they arrived near evening in the cut which was named Hot Spring Gate, and which on the outward journey had been left for exploration on the return. Preuss and Frémont were together, the rest of the party having gone by another route, except Benoist, who recently joined them. Preuss saw a fine clear spring gushing from a rock, and took a hasty drink to find that the water was hot. There were eight or ten of these hot springs in this canyon. The whole party was presently united at the Goat Island camp where a heavy storm of rain fell upon them; but nevertheless Frémont says he slept soundly, "after one of the most fatiguing days" he had ever experienced. Nothing is more wearing perhaps than working a boat through waters such as he had passed, as there is, in addition to the muscular tax, a considerable amount of nerve strain.

The next morning, August 25th, Lajeunesse, Frémont's great favourite, and evidently a fine boatman, from whom he doubtless took advice as to running the canyons, rather than from Kit Carson, was sent to the scene of the wreck to secure the articles which had been saved, and by mid-day they were all on the march. The next morning early they arrived at the place where the carts had been hidden. These were soon assembled again enabling the expedition to go forward once more on wheels. If a road is at all good a horse can pull much more than can be packed on his back, but packing in a new region has the advantage of not limit-

ing the traveller to a road, or even to a trail. I have helped in taking a pack-train up an almost perpendicular sandstone cliff 1500 feet high, where no man or mule had ever gone before, where trees had to be felled, rocks picked away, and mules "boosted" from behind by two men, to succeed, which is proof of the mobility of the pack-mule, if any were necessary. In the case of Frémont's caravan now, the road was known, it was comparatively simple and smooth, and it was a decided advantage to be rid of the labour of slinging the packs several times a day. The carts rolled along steadily over the waggon trail and on the last day of August, 1842, the party drove into Fort Laramie after an absence of forty-two days. The fort saluted with numerous discharges of its single cannon, to which the small arms of the explorers joyfully responded. Frémont had been in no new country; it is even doubtful if he was first on the peak since named for him, but he had gathered a large amount of accurate information, which had not been before observed, and he was ready to present it to the American people. So intelligent was it that it is referred to as authority to this day.

As they proceeded eastward down the North Platte they were able to cross and recross at pleasure, for the drought by this time had reduced the river to a few shallow rivulets meandering upon a vast desert of sand. This was the route followed outward by the larger party, Frémont himself having come around by St. Vrain's Fort. He passed, therefore, for the first time the noted Chimney Rock, a landmark described to him by Preuss. "It consists," said Preuss, "of marl and earthy limestone, and the weather is rapidly diminishing its height, which is not more than 200 feet above the river. Travellers who visited it some years since placed its height at upwards of 500 feet." The location is near the present town of Bayard, Nebraska. In 1869, Dr. F. V. Hayden described it as shooting "up its tall white spire from 100 to 150 feet." It was the work of erosion. The weather now was delightful, food and water

were plentiful, and the whole party were in fine spirits feeling that at last they had left behind the dread land of darkness. They even developed a desire to make a friendly call on a Sioux village, some of whose chiefs had been among those met at Fort Laramie. How different the sensations now, looking back, from those of not so very long before when there was gloom ahead. At the junction of the South Platte the barrel of pork was dug from its hiding place in the ground, and it was a "seasonable" addition to the food supply.

Frémont was tenacious. He had conceived the idea of descending the Platte in a boat, and he resolved to try it again at this point. He had no boat and there was no wood for one here, but he knew a way, or Carson did. A number of buffalo bulls were killed, and four of the best skins were sewed together with buffalo sinew, stretched over a basket frame of willow, the seams smeared with a mixture of ashes and tallow, and the whole left in the hot sun for nearly a day. The skins drying in the sun drew themselves taut all over the willow frame and there was the boat—a bull-boat as such vessels were styled by the trappers. It was eight feet long, five wide with a round bow; and only drew, with four men aboard, about four inches. With great hopes of success in spite of the low water, Frémont, Preuss, and two of the men manned the craft, but they did not dash down with a raging torrent; on the contrary, they dragged and pulled, and pulled and dragged, their prairie ship laboriously over the broad waste of sands where a river should have been. Then they abandoned her on a lonely bar, completely convinced of the hopelessness of navigating this flat expanse of tiny rills. On September 18th, Grand Island was reached; and going on down the river on the 22d the village of the Grand Pawnees, near the present town of Central City, Nebraska, a landmark of the region, where some green vegetables were obtained. These Indians were in the midst of harvesting.

And here, lest the reader may conclude from the talk at Fort Laramie that the Indian was always a desperate, bloodthirsty character, and that the white man is the only saintly being on earth, I am moved to insert the Indian creed of George Catlin, the famous painter of Indians, announced after he had spent eight years, following 1832, among the tribes of the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains:

I love the people who have always made me welcome with the best they had. I love a people who are honest without laws, who have no jails and no poor houses. I love a people who keep the Commandments without ever having read them or heard them preached from the pulpit. I love a people who never swear, who never take the name of God in vain. I love a people who love their neighbours as they love themselves. I love a people who worship God without a Bible, for I believe that God loves them also. I love the people whose religion is all the same, and who are free from religious animosities. I love a people who have never raised a hand against me, or stolen my property, where there was no law to punish for either. I love the people who never have fought a battle with white men except on their own ground. I love and don't fear mankind where God has made and left them, for they are children. I love a people who live and keep what is their own without locks or keys. I love all people who do the best they can, and oh! how I love a people who don't live for the love of money.[1]

As to the safety of property among Indians—at least among some Indians—the living without locks, I can agree with Mr. Catlin. On one occasion I sojourned alone for about five weeks (in 1884) with the Moki of Arizona on the East Mesa, in the village of Hano (Tewa). I never locked my door at night, nor when I went off, even for a whole day, partly because I was sure nothing would be disturbed, and partly because there was no lock! I could cite numerous

[1] *Last Rambles amongst the Indians*, etc., George Catlin, London, 1868.

Chief Yellow-Dog, a Blackfoot

The Blackfoot tribe was the most dangerous in the northern country. The Crows came next. In the south the Apaches and the Comanches were correspondingly fierce

Photograph by F. Jay Haynes

other instances of trust in the natives of the Far West that was justified in full. Charles Eastman, himself a Sioux, says:

> The native American has been generally despised by his white conquerors for his poverty and simplicity. They forget, perhaps, that his religion forbade the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of luxury. To him, as to other single minded men in every age and race, from Diogenes to the brothers of Saint Francis, from the Montanists to the Shakers, the love of possessions has appeared a snare, and the burdens of a complex society a source of needless peril and temptation. Furthermore, it was the rule of his life to share the fruits of his skill and success with his less fortunate brothers.[1]

We may, in a scientific analysis, hold that this generous sharing of property was merely a necessity in the stage of development in which these primitive people found themselves, yet their laws of hospitality and of brotherhood were a fact. No member of a tribe ever dropped dead of starvation when the other members were enjoying plenty, but in the large cities of "civilization" death from starvation and exposure are not uncommon, which seems, at least, to indicate that our own development is not complete. Furthermore a hungry man, even a stranger, was welcome to food, among the Indians.

In the preface to a charming little book,[2] Francis La Flesche has this to say, and it is worth quoting in this connection:

> The white people speak of the country at this period [Lewis and Clark] as a "wilderness," as though it was an empty tract without human interest or history. To us Indians it was as clearly

[1] *The Soul of the Indian*, by Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), New York, 1911. Dr. Eastman writes from the standpoint of his own tribe, the Sioux.

[2] *The Middle Five. Indian Boys at School*, by Francis La Flesche. Boston, 1900. Mr. La Flesche belongs to the Siouan stock.

defined then as it is to-day; we knew the boundaries of tribal lands, those of our friends and those of our foes; we were familiar with every stream, the contour of every hill, and each peculiar feature of the landscape had its tradition.

In short, the Far West was occupied by a people who were intelligent, with a love of home and family quite as strong as the similar traits in white men, and they combated the intrusion of the Europeans who rode, roughshod, with no "by your leave," over everything, killing the game and even the people, destroying the grass and doing other, from the Indian point of view, incalculable and unwarranted damage. The Indian always had a strong love for his children, and injury to them, or to his family in any way, was invariably fiercely resented.

The Pawnees, from whom Frémont purchased the supply of vegetables, belonged to a large confederacy of the Caddoan family whose country extended in this region across the valley of the Platte, and along it east and west, the main body of the Caddoans being south in Texas and Louisiana. They were not at this time antagonistic to the whites, and many of them served as scouts for the United States Army in later movements against hostile tribes. They were eventually destroyed by contact with the diseases of civilisation, only a few hundred now remaining.

On the morning of September 24th, as the expedition proceeded eastward down the Platte, the Loup fork coming in from the north was reached, a fine stream with a swift current of clear water; not muddy and yellow, like the Platte. It was deep, too, and the ford was difficult, requiring repeated attempts to secure a satisfactory crossing. Camp was made on the left bank of the fork, at the junction, and here the party stopped two days for those astronomical observations, about which Frémont was more active and conscientious than any other explorer of whom I know. He obtained 41° 22′ 11″ for the latitude of the mouth, which

appears to be very nearly correct. It was Frémont's intention to go to the Missouri River at the mouth of the Platte and by water descend to St. Louis from here. He had some days before sent in advance to Bellevue, a short distance above the mouth of the Platte, C. Lambert and two men to secure the construction of a boat by the carpenters of the American Fur Company's establishment, at that place, which was in charge of Mr. Peter A. Sarpy. On the 27th of September as the caravan was marching, they met one of the men returning with a supply of provisions from Mr. Sarpy and a note informing Frémont that the desired boat was under process of construction. Making his usual careful and detailed notes of the country as he went along, Frémont kept steadily on, and waking before daylight on the morning of the first day of October he was gratified and pleased to hear that inevitable indication of rural comfort and prosperity, the sound of cow-bells, at settlements across the Missouri, on whose banks he had arrived. Only when one has been long separated from a milk and butter diet can he appreciate completely the music of a cow-bell drifting across green meadows. A short journey brought the expedition to the house of Mr. Sarpy and here the tribulations of the land journey ended; the "wilderness" was behind, for a time, and Frémont enjoyed the relief of "being again within the pale of civilisation." Bellevue was a very old location on the Missouri, and at the time of Frémont's visit the American Fur Company had a fort there built some time since 1830.

The boat was so far along that a few days were sufficient to complete her, and as all the horses, etc., had been sold at auction at Bellevue, there was not much to encumber the craft, which was manned with ten oars, to be relieved every hour. On the 4th of October they started on the current of the river and continued with rapidity, arriving at the mouth of the Kansas, Westport Landing then, on the 10th, exactly four months since leaving the post of Cyprian Chou-

teau, ten miles up that river. The Missouri, from the point of embarkation at Bellevue, to the city of St. Louis, was surveyed and sketched in, with astronomical observations taken at night and at midday when weather permitted, and on the 17th of October the metropolis of the West, St. Louis, was achieved. Here the remaining effects were sold, and Frémont took passage on a steamboat, the next day, for the East, reaching Washington in eleven days.

In his memoirs he says nothing about the joy of his bride at his safe return, but merely states, with almost too great reticence, that he found his family well, and then goes on to tell of the preparation of his report on the first expedition, the fortunes of which have been followed in the preceding pages. Not only was a general map of the region explored prepared by Mr. Preuss, but a series of maps to show each day's journey, "a guide book in atlas form" for the use of emigrants which was suggested by Senator Benton, the constant, unflagging, friend of the West and the Westerner.

Many plants had been collected and these were turned over to Professor Torrey for classification, while Frémont wrote out his report to Congress. In this task he was assisted by his wife, to whom he dictated. The report was received with very great interest, for it was the first of its kind—the first to go so deeply and thoroughly and frankly, into every detail of exploration. On motion of Senator Linn it was printed and a number of extra copies ordered. Linn stated: "All the objects of the expedition have been accomplished. . . . He climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky Mountains, until then untrodden by any known human being." This shows how little was known of Bonneville's movements by even the "circle" which took so great a degree of interest in the exploration of the Far West. Linn went on to say that the report proved that the country for several hundred miles from the frontier of Missouri "is exceedingly beautiful and fertile," and when we recall that some previous explorers had denominated the self-same region a

desert that would serve as a barrier for all time, the value of Frémont's clear, sensible, descriptions is understood. Whatever else he may or may not have done, he came pretty near to a scientific statement of facts, as he saw them.

This expedition was the first act planned by the "circle" in aid of Western emigration. Apparently it was a work of the government, but in reality it was originated and instigated by this coterie, determined to know all about the West, and determined to push ahead the emigration to the Pacific, their only reason for more or less secrecy being the opposition of the Government. In pursuance, then, of this determination to secure the great West for the United States what happened next is exactly what should be expected; another and more extensive expedition was projected, and at the same time the senators from Missouri opposed all and every attempt on the part of Great Britain to compromise and delay. They believed Oregon as far as the 49th parallel was ours and they worked to preserve our rights. Linn introduced a bill to encourage and protect emigrants to Oregon by a line of forts, and also providing grants of land. This bill was passed in the Senate but not in the House, though nevertheless, Frémont was of the opinion that it encouraged emigrants to believe the government meant to protect them; encouraged them to cross to the new land.

The second Frémont expedition was to connect with the first one at South Pass, though it was to approach that point by a different route. Beyond, it was to examine the region south of the Columbia, in such a manner that, together with the first expedition and with the work of Captain Wilkes, it would be able to present a "connected survey of the interior and western half of the continent." Accordingly in the early spring of 1843 Frémont left Washington by stage-coach to execute the plans, having with him his wife and the whole Benton family, on their way to the Benton residence in St. Louis. While crossing the Pennsylvania mountains the

coach was capsized, and Mrs. Benton was stunned by a cut on the head, from which she recovered after a rest of a day at an old-fashioned tavern nearby, where the party was so well fed and housed that both Frémont, and Preuss, who was with him, recalled the circumstances many times in the strenuous days that followed. The stay in St. Louis was not prolonged. Frémont knew just what he wanted to do in the way of preparation, and he did it efficiently. In a short time everything was ready for the proposed eight months' travel beyond the Rocky Mountains, during which time Mrs. Frémont was to stay at the Benton homestead and open all letters that came for her husband, using her discretion as to forwarding any while he still remained within reach, which led to a decisive and important action on her part.

Colonel S. W. Kearny, U. S. A., was in command of the military division in which St. Louis was situated, and the young explorer applied to him for a 12-pound howitzer to be taken along, as he "expected to be much among Indians who had for many years a known character for audacious bravery and treachery." Colonel Kearny, afterwards fated to be so antagonistically associated as superior officer with Frémont, complied with the request and the howitzer was furnished, together with other arms, from the St. Louis arsenal.

Frémont here secured the services of six of the voyageurs who had been with him on the first expedition, among them his favourite Basil Lajeunesse, and one Louis Zindel, a Prussian artillerist who had been with the second Nicollet expedition, and who probably was responsible for the howitzer matter. Ashley had taken a similar gun with him in 1824, clear through to Utah Lake, then called Ashley Lake, but I have never heard that it was of any particular service. For a guide, one of the very best men possible was engaged, no less than Thomas Fitzpatrick, of whom something has been said in this chapter. He was still a man

far from old but his hair was white, due, relates Frémont, to an encounter with the Blackfoot Indians of the Wind River Range, when all of his party but him had been killed, and he had been hunted for three days, before escaping. Kit Carson was to join the expedition later. On May 17th Frémont arrived at what is now Kansas City, and while engaged there in putting the finishing touches on the accoutrements of the party, he received a letter from his wife urging him immediately to set forth. Consequently on the morning of May 29th, only twelve days after reaching the place, he started without knowing the reason for the sudden move, but having such confidence in his wife, the daughter be it remembered of Senator Benton, that he did not halt to inquire.

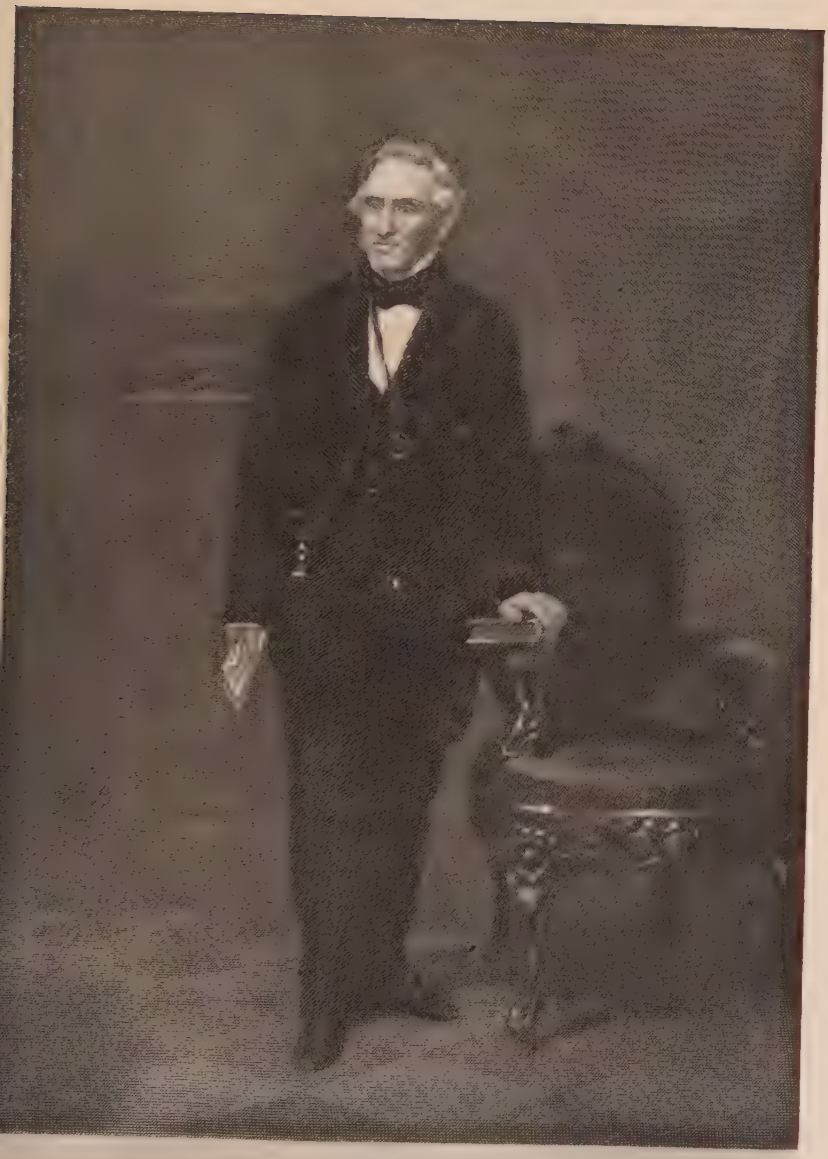
CHAPTER VI

FROM KANSAS CITY TO GREEN RIVER VALLEY

A Troublesome Cannon—Mutiny of Mrs. Frémont and Others—Benton Demands a Court-martial—Outfit of the Second Expedition—The Remarkable William Gilpin—Across Kansas and Nebraska—St. Vrain's Fort Again—Beginning of Pueblo, Colorado—Kit Carson Comes—The Fontaine qui Bouit—Up the Câche à la Poudre River—Assault by Arapahos and Cheyennes—The Oregon Trail to Green River Valley.

WHILE Lieutenant Frémont is hastening westward, from the frontier settlements, on the sudden admonition of his wife, it is in order to inquire the cause of this peculiar action. Although he did not exactly know why he was instructed to move so speedily on his way, he seems to have been apprehensive of some adverse order to prevent the execution of the idea of extending this exploration into disputed territory, or into forbidden foreign territory, for it was understood that President Tyler and his advisers were not much in favour of an expedition in that direction at this time. Like the first expedition, the order for it had been issued through the influence, in a roundabout way, of the "circle," and the Administration knew little concerning it. Hence Frémont's celerity in acting on his wife's exhortation. He knew that she fully understood all phases of the situation and it was best not to hesitate when she said go. Young though she was she seems to have possessed a remarkable maturity of thought and action.

The immediate inspiration of the order to return was the discovery by the powers at Washington that Frémont



Thomas H. Benton

Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri

1782–1858. Father-in-law of Frémont, and Senator for thirty years, a man of high ideals, clear judgment, and independent thought

From an engraving from a painting by Chappell. Engraving published in 1862

had added a twelve-pounder howitzer to his armament. In their opinion this gave the expedition the air of a military reconnaissance, and considering the delicate balance of affairs with Great Britain as well as with Mexico, an extra well-armed party of considerable size, moving into debatable territory, on the one hand, and forbidden territory on the other, had a warlike aspect which diplomatically was undesirable. While a twelve-pounder could not make an army it gave an army character to what had been authorised as purely scientific. From at least two points of view, therefore, the cannon was hazardous; and the order for Frémont's return to explain appears to have been merely precautionary. Besides, the belief that a cannon was of great use in fighting Indians in the field, though held for a time by General Ashley, as noted, and also on one expedition by Smith, Sublette, and Jackson a good many years before Frémont's activities, had been abandoned by the frontiersmen. It is interesting to note that the expedition on which Jedediah Smith and his partners took the cannon was the last trip of his life. He was shot by Comanches, far from the cannon or any other assistance. Mrs. Frémont was very young, but she had decision, like her illustrious father, and she well knew the attitude of mind of that father and his close friends in St. Louis and in Washington, who made up the "circle" to which I have referred.

It is pertinent here to quote what she had to say, in later years, on this subject. First it may be premised that the Benton home in St. Louis was a centre for the congregation of men like General William Clark, Ramsay Crooks, who also at one time brought Washington Irving, the "many Chouteaus," pioneer priests, French *voyageurs*, and "wealthy citizens, Spanish, French, and American," interested in the Western trade. "Year after year," says Mrs. Frémont, "this small but forceful council met with my father in the vacations of Congress, and he carried up to their friends in Washington the knowledge gained among them as

an impelling force towards our more energetic occupation of Oregon."[1] In the winter of 1842–3, Mrs. Frémont acted, as before noted, as her husband's secretary, and "had full knowledge of the large scope and national importance of these journeys—a knowledge as yet strictly confined to the few carrying out their aim," that is to say, these "few" were the "circle" referred to by Frémont, a term I have chosen by which to designate the group specially interested in promoting our claims and welfare in the Far West. Mrs. Frémont continues:

I was to open mail and forward to the camp at Kaw Landing, now Kansas City, all that in my judgment required Mr. Frémont's attention. One day there came for him an official letter from his Colonel, the chief of the Topographical Bureau: it was an order recalling him to Washington, whither he was directed to return and explain why he had armed his party with a howitzer: saying that it was a scientific, not a military, expedition, and should not have been so armed. I saw at once that this would make delays which would involve the overthrow of great plans, and I felt there was a hidden hand at work. Fortunately my father was absent from St. Louis, and I could act on my instinct. Without telling any one of the order, I put it away and hurried off a messenger to Mr. Frémont—one of his men, Basil Lajeunesse, who was to join him with the last things. I feared a duplicate letter might have been sent to the frontier. . . . I charged Basil to make all haste, for much depended on that letter. I wrote Mr. Frémont that he *must not ask why*, but must start at once, ready or not ready. The animals could rest and fatten at Bent's Fort. Only GO. There was a reason but he could not know it; my father would take care of everything. And as we acted together unquestioningly, he did go immediately. Not until I received the good-bye letter did I write in answer to his Colonel. . . . Then I wrote him exactly what I had done.[2]

[1] *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 767.

[2] "The Origin of the Frémont Explorations," by Jessie Benton Frémont, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., New Series, 1890–91, p. 768.

She stated to Colonel Abert that the howitzer *was* necessary, etc. She says further:

I had so grown into my father's purpose that now, when my husband could be of such large aid to its accomplishment, I had no hesitation in risking for him all consequences. Upon this second expedition hinged great results. It made California known in a way which roused and enlisted our people, and led directly to its being acquired during the third expedition . . . and this time there were no foes "in the rear."

Senator Benton remarks of this incident:

"She [Mrs. Frémont] read the countermanding orders, and detained them, and Frémont knew nothing of their existence until after he had returned from one of the most marvellous and eventful expeditions of modern times—one to which the United States are indebted (among other things) for the present ownership of California instead of seeing it a British possession. The writer of this View who was then in St. Louis approved of the course which his daughter had taken (for she had stopped the order before he knew it) and he wrote a letter to the department condemning the recall, repulsing the reprimand which had been lavished upon Frémont, and demanding a court martial for him when he should return.[1]

The Senator ascribed this counter move, or order, to the jealousy of the West Point men, who, he says, sought an easy life, and who felt Frémont's activity as a reproach. But the history of West Pointers does not warrant such an inference. Frémont himself characterised this recall as "a flimsy excuse for breaking up the expedition," and says it was apparent to Mrs. Frémont, "as was also the true reason for it," though he does not define this true reason, except to state that it was "compliance of the administra-

[1] *Thirty Years' View*, vol. ii., p. 579. Of the government officials Benton further remarks that they were "innocent of the conception of the first expedition, equally innocent of the second, though not equally passive in the latter case, countermanding it and lavishing censure upon the young explorer."

tion with the English situation in Oregon."[1] The suppression of the order was nothing less than mutiny on the part of Mrs. Frémont, of Frémont himself, who must have, indirectly, at least, suggested beforehand so reckless a proceeding, and of Senator Benton, who approved. It indicated that Frémont had little of the regulation training of a West Point man, in short that he was as yet hardly a soldier in the sense of being a disciplinarian; if he had been, his wife would not even have thought of thwarting orders from headquarters. It showed, also, that there were plans long on foot concerning the acquisition of California Alta, that were firm, independent, broad, and deep, and this should be remembered in estimating the action of Frémont in certain much-discussed future events; and Frémont knew all these plans, knew what was expected of him in certain contingencies, and knew he had the support of some of the most influential men of the day in Washington.

However commendable in itself this Benton mutiny may have been (and it has its good side), and however fertile in future benefit, if it was so fertile as the Senator believed, it was personally, it seems to me, an unfortunate move for Frémont; it placed him in a worse light than ever in the eyes of the regular army officers, and gave some colour to the accusation that he was no soldier, that he was an officer only by favouritism. This action of his wife, therefore, instead of aiding him in his career, perhaps was a detriment in the future, when other antagonisms developed. Had he obeyed the order, there probably would have been a few weeks' delay of no special consequence, the cannon could have been abandoned (it was of no service and proved more or less of a burden—the same weight in dried beans would have been far more important), and the expedition could

[1] In a biographical sketch of Mrs. Frémont she is quoted thus regarding this order: "This I felt would break up my father's and Mr. Frémont's real plans, which were to hold the Bay of San Francisco against the English." The "real" plans, it would seem, were not often divulged.

have gone out lacking the blemish of insubordination. On the other hand, if it was to be abandoned altogether, it was the Government's business, not Frémont's. Incidentally Frémont might have given a little time to examining Albert Gallatin's map and to ascertaining what Captain Bonneville had been doing ten years earlier in the country where he was going, and he would have learned something about the mystical Buenaventura River that might have prevented loss of time and days of starvation and exposure.

The great Senator and his colleagues were wise men, patriotic men, powerful in public affairs; in many things in which they opposed the Administration they were probably right; their ideals were just and high;—but after all they were not the whole Government and this particular affair was not in accordance with proper, orderly procedure. And was it not a mistake to instil into the young lieutenant of engineers and his charming wife the feeling that the regularly elected or appointed officers of the Government could be ignored with impunity? Once off, however, Frémont proceeded to execute the original orders given him, nominally by Colonel Abert, Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, but in reality inspired by the circle; indeed, in a roundabout way, merely the wishes of Senator Benton and himself expressed through the army. On the surface he was to connect his 1842 survey with the Columbia River region and with the work of Commander Wilkes of the navy who had directed exploratory operations in 1841 in that region and in California Alta. This was the bald order; behind it was his special understanding with the circle, which appears to have been that he was to use his judgment and find out all he could about conditions, not only in Oregon, but in California Alta, and act to the best interests of the United States, as far as he was able. Senator Benton rightly desired to get first-hand knowledge of these conditions, and for a very proper and worthy purpose: to instruct the people and to guard against any possible weakness or ignorance of the Administration,

in dealing with great questions rapidly coming to the front; questions which the far-reaching mind of this admirable American statesman saw written large across the face of the Far West. He intended to anchor California Alta and set the sails of Oregon in our direction.

The party, like the one of 1842, was composed of Creole and Canadian French, and Americans.[1] Jacob Dodson, a free negro, eighteen years of age, devoted to the Benton family, was a member; in all thirty-nine men. Frémont always very conscientiously gives the name of each member of his parties, but they will not be repeated here. His favourite man, Basil Lajeunesse, ever ready and ever faithful, was also of the party. Through Major Cummins, the Indian Agent of the locality, a friend of Senator Benton's, Frémont engaged the services of two fine Delaware Indians, a father and son, as hunters. Mr. Theodore Talbot of Washington, and Mr. Frederick Dwight of Springfield, Mass., the latter on his way to the Sandwich Islands and China, by way of Fort Vancouver, were with the company. The arms consisted of Hall's carbines and the aforesaid howitzer, the traditional fifth wheel to the waggon, to the management of which three men were detailed under the charge of the German artilleryman, Zindel. It is safe to say that neither Fitzpatrick nor Carson would have wasted much effort on this piece of ordnance. Twelve carts, drawn by two mules each, transported the bulk of the baggage, while a light spring waggon, or ambulance, carried the instruments. Frémont is always particular to enumerate the instruments he took with him, and in this instance they were: one refracting telescope by Frauenhofer, one reflecting circle by Gambey, two sextants by Troughton, one pocket chronometer by Brockbank, one syphon barometer by Bunten of Paris, one cistern barometer by Frye and Shaw, New York, and a number of small compasses.

[1] By Creole French is meant natives of Louisiana of French descent. For the full list of names see Frémont's *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 169.

An Old-Time Frontier Scout
These men had only muzzle-loading rifles
From a drawing by Paxson

On the 29th of May, 1843, the start was made from the little town or village which is now Kansas City and four miles covered in a cold rain to the "verge of the prairies." The route to South Pass was to be varied. That is, Frémont intended to follow up the Kaw or Kansas River, for a considerable distance, instead of the Platte as before, and cross through the mountains at some new point near the head of the Arkansas. This was expected to yield fresh knowledge of the region, and at the same time, if practicable, mark out a new road to Oregon by a more southerly course. On May 31st they arrived at Elm Grove, a station on the Santa Fé Trail, thirty miles from Westport (Kansas City), in what is now Johnson County. Near their camp was one of several waggons; a party under J. B. Chiles of Missouri, bound for California Alta. Mr. Chiles had with him machinery for a saw-mill he intended to build on the Sacramento River. Here, by invitation, another remarkable Western man joined the caravan for the trip to Oregon, William Gilpin, a man of whom it has been said: "It is quite probable that the verdict of posterity will be that the West owes more to William Gilpin than to any other American. . . . It was not until Senator Benton had made the acquaintance of Gilpin that he became enthusiastic over the whole West."[1] Yet one finds very little about Gilpin in biographies and cyclopedias. He was first governor of Colorado, a major under Doniphan, and colonel of a battalion called the "Santa Fé Trace Battalion" during the Mexican War.

As far as the ford of the Kansas River, near where Topeka now lies, they were following the Oregon Trail as on the former journey, but there, instead of crossing the Kaw, or Kansas, they continued west along its south bank over a beautiful undulating country, traversed by many streams whose bottoms were densely wooded, and over uplands green and grassy; a region now too well known to require

[1] William E. Connelley, in *Kansas Historical Society Collections*, vol. x., p. 113. Gilpin was born in Pennsylvania in 1822.

description. Frequent bridges had to be built for even the small streams are often deep and "miry" and when a team, in the early days, the bridgeless days, drove in it was quite uncertain whether it could get out on the other side. There were deep, sharp, muddy gullies, too, all over Eastern Kansas, into which the front wheels of a waggon plunged, while the rear was up in the air, as I discovered many years after. With the carts of the Frémont expedition this trouble would not be so apparent.

On the morning of the 4th of June a small party of Delaware and Kansas Indians were met returning from a hunting expedition. They were, of course, entirely friendly, but two days later a band of a different stripe startled the caravan, when Maxwell, who had gone back nine miles to the camp of the preceding day to look for a stray horse, suddenly appeared riding at full speed with a war party of Osages, heads shaved to the scalp-lock and brilliant with red blankets, in fierce pursuit. The Osages boldly charged into the train and cut out a number of good horses. Frémont and his men were ready. Well mounted they pursued and after a hard chase of seven or eight miles returned with all the stock. Frémont laments that this difficulty was "a first fruit of having gentlemen in company—very estimable to be sure, but who are not trained to care and vigilance" and not subject to orders.

By the 8th they reached the Smoky Hill Fork, which he says is the principal southern branch of the Kansas; forming here, by its junction with the Republican, the main Kansas River. This is not the way these streams are classified to-day. The Kansas is now formed by the junction of the Smoky Hill and Solomon Forks; hence the part above the Republican junction which he describes as the Smoky Hill is really the Kansas itself as charted on our present maps. Rafts had to be built to make a crossing and it took a whole day. The junction by Frémont's observations was latitude 39° 03′ 38″, longitude 96° 24′ 56″, with an altitude of 926 feet. Junction City is now within a mile or two of this spot. Its

altitude by the Kansas Pacific Railway is 1082 feet. The latitude is about correct but the longitude is almost 97.

From here they went on up the Republican, or Pawnee Fork, through a beautiful, well watered country with herds of elk and antelope occasionally visible, till they reached, at length, what the Indians called the "Big Timbers," not the Big Timbers of the fur hunters and the maps, however, which was on the Arkansas River and was "an extensive grove or forest of cottonwoods extending for several miles along the river at some distance below the site of Bent's Fort."[1] Progress was slow with the carts, and in order to cover more territory, Frémont decided not to wait for them but to divide his party, and place Fitzpatrick in charge of the supply train, to come on as best he could to St. Vrain's Fort on the Platte with twenty-five men, while with the other fifteen, going light, except for that precious howitzer of brass and the instrument waggon, Frémont himself would be able to travel swiftly. On the morning of the 16th of June they separated.

Frémont cut over to Solomon's Fork and journeyed across its tributaries for some days, noting, as usual with him, the character of the soil, the timber, plants, grasses, animals, etc., as no other explorer had ever done. Amongst other plants he mentions one that has remained a delight to me from the first time I saw it many years ago: the wild sensitive plant, *Schrankia angustata*. One could not travel far across the breezy prairie where this delicate plant flourishes without noticing it, and its sister, *S. uncinata*, especially the latter in its season of bloom, when its globular, down-like flower, of a purplish rose colour, exhales a fragrance as if sprayed with the attar of rose. Hence its name of "sensitive rose." The leaves, as is the habit of plants of this class, wilt to the ground at the touch of a hand. Proceeding north-westerly across the Kansas counties of Clay, Cloud, Jewell, Smith, and the north-east corner of Phillips he crossed

[1] Chittenden's *American Fur Trade*, p. 803.

the 40th parallel into Nebraska. On the 19th of June prairie dogs were seen for the first time, and after that there were many of them. The altitude increased; now 1900 feet it soon ran up to 2130, as they mounted the Great Plains plateau. One stream was named Prairie Dog River on account of the myriads of these little creatures that existed along its bottoms. Prairie Dog Creek enters the Republican River in the county of Harlan, Southern Nebraska, near the town of Alma. Frémont gives the altitude of his camp on Prairie Dog River as 2350 feet, and 39° 49′ 28″latitude and 100° 52′ 00″ longitude. On the 25th of June they passed over high smooth ridges 3100 feet above sea, with numberless buffalo covering the country, and camped within a few miles of the main Republican.

The next day, soon after leaving this camp, they were surprised to discover a sudden and marked change in the character of the surroundings. Instead of fertility, sand hills, bare and arid, spread around them. Timber grew scarce; the features of the land took on a desert character and the Republican River, at which they arrived, was shallow, spreading out over an expanse of yellow sand with treeless banks. They had passed the 100th meridian, which in later years came to be known as the general dividing line between the arid and the humid regions of the Far West. For several days they travelled through this broken and dry sandy waste, about 4000 feet altitude, across the south-western part of what is now Nebraska, and the north-eastern corner of Colorado, till on the last day of June they looked down upon "a broad and misty valley, where, about ten miles off, and a thousand feet below us, the South Fork of the Platte was rolling magnificently along, swollen with the waters of the melting snows. It was in strong and refreshing contrast with the parched country from which we had just issued; and when at night the broad expanse of water grew indistinct, it almost seemed that we had pitched our tents on the shore of the sea."

Long's Peak (Altitude 14,271 feet), and Estes Park, Colorado
From the engraving on wood after drawing by Thomas Moran, N.A.
In Dr. Hayden's Report for 1877

They reached the South Platte about opposite the mouth of Pawnee Creek, near Atwood, Logan County, Colorado, and were on the trail of the 1842 expedition again. Frémont's map published with his *Memoirs* does not cover this part of his journeying, and furthermore it is an exceedingly poor map from a geographer's standpoint, yet it was made as late as 1886. Probably Frémont did not himself direct its preparation.[1] On June 31st they reached Bijou Creek as they proceeded up the Platte, and caught again that first faint blue of the mountains which always comes like an inspiration. Soon they saw Long's Peak and the rest of the range glittering with snow, and on the 4th of July arrived at St. Vrain's Fort where the custodian invited them to join him in the feast with which the day was to be honoured.

Frémont had expected to replenish here his exhausted larder and also to purchase some fresh horses or mules, but in both he was disappointed as on his former visit, for the post happened to be impoverished at this time also. In a game country the inability to secure provisions did not matter so much, but the lack of good animals for travelling was serious. Few persons who have never been far from railways, and other organised transportation, can appreciate the great dependence one must place on his horses or mules. One can walk, to be sure, as Robert Stuart and others had to do, and even carry baggage on his back, but it is a condition never welcomed and hampering to the last degree. In a wilderness, with good animals, one is a king; without, a beggar. Having heard that mules could be obtained at Taos, a large herd having arrived from California, Maxwell, who was to go down there to visit his family, was commissioned to buy ten or twelve, pack them with provisions and necessaries, and meet the party again at the mouth of the Fontaine qui Bouit (generally written later as "qui Bouille"), or Boil-

[1] The reader is referred for the exact route to the map of the 1842 and 1843-44 routes, published with the *Report* and also by the Topographical Bureau.

ing Spring Creek, now called Fountain Creek, on the Arkansas River, where Frémont intended to go before long.

This was the site of the present city of Pueblo, Colorado, and the site of the trading establishment and settlement which the mulatto scout, fur trader, and Crow chieftain Jim Beckwourth, and others, had established the previous year, October, 1842. Chittenden speaks of Beckwourth as "one of those 'charming liars' . . . who are delightful to listen to for the very enormity of their misstatements. The early West had many such characters, but few, like Beckwourth, have made themselves a place in literature and history." Captain Chittenden is rather too severe on Beckwourth, it seems to me, for Beckwourth appears to have been a frontiersman hardly surpassed in dexterity and skill by Bridger, Carson, Fitzpatrick, Jedediah Smith, or any of the others of that masterful band, but as he was believed to be of partly African blood, this put him at a disadvantage, especially with writers of the slave-holding States, who would consider him impudent to rate himself high.[1]

Lieutenant Pike, in 1806, built a rough defensive structure a little above the mouth of Fountain Creek, and others sojourned in the neighbourhood in the interval between that time and the winter of 1821–22, when Jacob Fowler, a fur-trader, built and occupied a cabin there; but the first permanent settlers were Jim Beckwourth and his colleagues, Jim having arrived with his latest wife, Louise Sandeville, in October, 1842, and started a trading-post which was successful. He was

joined by from fifteen to twenty free trappers with their families. We all united our labours and constructed an adobe fort sixty yards square. By the following spring [that is the spring of this year of Frémont's second expedition] we had grown into quite a litte settlement, and we gave it the name of

[1] "There was no appearance whatever of the negro in Beckwourth, yet all the old trappers and plainsmen called him a 'nigger.'"—William E. Connelley, private letter.

Pueblo. Many of the company devoted themselves to agriculture, and raised very good crops the first season, such as wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, and abundance of all kinds of vegetables.[1]

At St. Vrain's one of the party, Oscar Sarpy, finding the occupation too fatiguing was discharged by his own request, and provided with arms and means of transportation to Fort Laramie, whence he could go back East with some party of trappers. He was a confirmed tenderfoot, and this kind of a person is a nuisance on any expedition. He will choose a wrong direction every time to get anywhere, and generally have no ability to take care of himself. On July 6th Maxwell set out for Taos, in the south, across the range, on the Rio Grande, the Spanish-Indian town which was then the gateway of New Mexico for the caravans of the Santa Fé Trail. Frémont continued his line of march up the Platte, soon passing the remains of two abandoned forts, one of which was still in a state of good preservation. After ten miles they reached the trading-post of Lupton called Fort Lancaster.[2] Here were horses, pigs, cattle, poultry, etc., a regular ranch in fact. Frémont halted an hour and then followed his caravan.

The next day on up the Platte a large village of Arapahos was met with; about 160 lodges located in a beautiful bottom. It was a prosperous community which received the white visitors with cordial hospitality. They were disappointed when Frémont said he had few presents for them; that almost everything was back with his main caravan under the care of the "White Head" or "Broken Hand," as they called

[1] Bonner's *Life of Beckwourth*, 1856, p. 464.

[2] Robert Morris Peck in *Kansas Historical Collections*, vol. viii., p. 493, says: "On the second day's march [1857] down the South Platte after leaving the mouth of Cherry Creek, we passed the ruins of three old abandoned trading-posts, a few miles apart, which I was told were formerly called respectively Forts Lupton, Lancaster, and St. Vrain, after their several owners. They seemed to have been abandoned several years, nothing remaining but the crumbling 'dobe walls."

Fitzpatrick. Continuing the explorers made their camp that night of July 7, 1843, on the Platte, a little above the mouth of Cherry Creek, a site now within the limits of the prosperous and beautiful city of Denver; Cherry Creek—that uncertain, unregulated, flow of water, sometimes a dribble, sometimes a deluge. During the earlier days of the city it was a subject of contention, some people declaring Cherry Creek was able to take care of itself, and a far larger number admitting that fact and also that it could take care of everything along its banks—take care to wash everything down to St. Louis. I well remember one very dark, wet, night in 1877, when the wild pealing of all the bells in town broke my sleep, and going out to discover the cause, it was found to be the indomitable Cherry Creek, once more breaking a record. In the dim light the waves could be seen "mountain high," booming and roaring, seeking whom they could devour. It seemed an impertinence for that ridiculous rivulet of the day before to be so easily causing such defiant devastation.

Where the South Platte divided into three forks, according to Frémont's observation, he followed the easternmost one. This appears to have been Plum Creek, and up it they went on the 8th, from eleven in the morning till night, when they camped on the East Branch about, say, where the town of Greenland now stands. The next day they proceeded eastward along the divide between the Arkansas and Platte waters, in search of buffalo, and incidentally new information, passing many of the singularly eroded rocks now so well known, one of which the men called the Pound-cake, a circular flat rock two or three hundred yards in circumference on top of a hill. This region is near the head of Monument Creek and the most remarkable portion of it farther south on Monument Creek has been called Monument Park. A little farther south is the beautiful area named "The Garden of the Gods," beyond which the dominating crest of Pike's Peak is seen.

Monumental Forms

In Monument Park, Colorado. The region is full of strange erosions of this kind
From Hayden's Report, 1877

Although the time was July 10th, snow fell heavily on the mountains and the great peak was white, as low down as they could see it, when they started on eastward over a rolling country, crossing the head-water of the Kiowa River and spending the night on the Bijou Fork, probably a short distance east of the present town of Sidney. Discovering no buffalo, the 11th found the caravan turning southward up the valley of the Bijou to an altitude of 7500 feet above sea and camping on the edge of the Arkansas drainage. "The soil," Frémont says, "of all this country [from the Missouri out] is excellent, admirably adapted to agricultural and pastoral population." How different this judgment from that of the travellers and explorers gone before who had proclaimed the same area worthless, and no more than a desolate barrier of barren desert. Recent census figures emphasise this correct estimate of the young engineer. The annual value *per square mile* of the farm products of this extensive region ranges from $300 to $5000, while from 100 to 10,000 bushels of grain per square mile are produced. This is up to the 100th meridian; beyond that the yield is irregular. Some of the finest fruits and most delicious melons in the world come from the very parts that were considered hopeless in the early years.

Turning to the south-west on July 12th, Frémont led his party to the waggon road that ran from St. Vrain's, etc., south to the Santa Fé Trail, to Bent's Fort, and camped on the Fontaine qui Bouit where it was fifty feet wide, at an altitude of 5800 feet, which must have been very near the site of Colorado Springs of to-day. The next morning they took to the heavily beaten, old Indian highway trail which, from the earliest memory of man and before, came down the Fountain Creek, from South Park, through the well-known canyon; from the Bayou Salade, Frémont says, using the nomenclature of the time. At noon on July 14th they camped on the Arkansas at the mouth of Fountain Creek, a little below the settlement described before, of which Jim

Beckwourth claimed to be a leading citizen: the village of Pueblo from which the thriving and enterprising city of Pueblo of to-day has grown in the space of seventy-one years.

The explorers were heartily welcomed, but Frémont was disappointed with the news received: there had been trouble at Taos; foreigners were attacked, and their property had been destroyed; Maxwell's father-in-law, Beaubien, had been obliged to escape to Santa Fé.[1] What would become of Maxwell, himself, en route, no one could guess. There was, therefore, no chance of securing supplies in that direction, especially as the Mexican government now issued an edict prohibiting trade with Americans. Kit Carson joined the party here and was at once sent to Bent's Fort, about seventy miles down the Arkansas, after mules. He was to travel across country from Bent's to St. Vrain's to meet Frémont again, but this was no task for him. A new man was engaged here, one Charles Towns, evidently to take the place of Sarpy, the confirmed tenderfoot. According to the observations taken the mouth of Fountain Creek, the site of Pueblo, was in latitude 38° 15′ 23″ and longitude 104° 58′ 30″, with an altitude above the sea of 4880 feet. The altitude given to-day according to the railway (D. & R. G.) is 4660 feet at the Union Station. Hayden made it 4703, and the longitude 104° 33′ 48″ latitude 38° 16′ 36″.

Maxwell not having arrived on the 16th of July, the time agreed on, a note was left for him to come on to St. Vrain's by the 26th, and the party retraced its way up Fountain Creek to the present position of Manitou, Frémont riding ahead and looking for the, even then, "celebrated springs,"

[1] Beckwourth says his trade with New Mexico was spoiled at this time (1843) because "the whole country was in a ferment on account of Colonel Cook's expedition from Texas which resulted so disastrously for the parties concerned." The Mexicans now disliked everything American. He gave up the effort to trade with them and went to California. (P. 464 of his Life, 1856.) See also mention of the Texan Santa Fé expedition in Chapter II., this work.

from which the Fontaine qui Bouit had received its name. Frémont's description of his visit to these now world-famous springs is so graceful that I quote it entire:

In the meantime, the clouds, which had been gathered all the afternoon over the mountains, began to roll down their sides; and a storm so violent burst upon me, that it appeared I had entered the storehouse of the thunder-storms. I continued, however, to ride along up the river until about sunset, and was beginning to be doubtful of finding the springs before the next day when I came suddenly upon a large smooth rock, about twenty yards in diameter, where the water from several springs was bubbling and boiling up in the midst of a white incrustation, with which it had covered a portion of the rock. As this did not correspond with the description given me by the hunters, I did not stop to taste the water, but dismounting, walked a little way up the river, and, passing through a narrow thicket of shrubbery bordering the stream, stepped directly upon a huge white rock, at the foot of which the river, already become a torrent, foamed along, broken by a small fall. A deer which had been drinking at the spring was startled by my approach, and, springing across the river, bounded off up the mountain. In the upper part of the rock, which had apparently been formed by deposition, was a beautiful white basin, overhung by currant bushes, in which the cold clear water bubbled up, kept in constant motion by the escaping gas, and overflowing the rock, which it had almost entirely covered with a smooth crust of glistening white. I had all day refrained from drinking, reserving myself for the spring; and as I could not well be more wet than the rain had already made me, I lay down by the side of the basin, and drank heartily of the delightful water. The spring is situated immediately at the foot of lofty mountains, beautifully timbered, which sweep closely round, shutting up the little valley in a kind of cove. As it was beginning to grow dark, I rode quickly down the river, on which I found the camp a few miles below.[1]

The 18th of July, the day following the arrival at the

[1] *Report*, p. 117.

springs, was clear and beautiful. As all wanted to drink of these delicious waters, the Lieutenant very considerately ordered camp to be pitched immediately at the spot, and the whole day was spent there, enjoying the rest and the beauty of the majestic surroundings, as well as the effervescing waters, in my opinion equal to any in the world. Neither Manitou, Colorado Springs, nor the once important Colorado City, between the two, were even dreamed of at this time; the hand and foot of man, and his advertising paint-pot, had not yet tarnished the innocence of nature in this locality. Fortunately the people who finally settled there have had, from the start, a just estimate of their responsibility as custodians of one of the most delightful places in the West. They have valiantly fought the paint-pot pirate, and it is to be hoped that they will be forever successful in keeping his desecrating signs in the pot where they belong. The extent to which people will tolerate advertising signs on the scenery of a country is the gauge of their souls.[1] No advertising man, who destroys natural beauty, can ever expect to enter heaven. His soul is dead.

Frémont gives the altitude, as determined at the time, as 6350 feet. The Denver and Rio Grande Railway gives the altitude of Manitou as 6307. The caravan made a good start for the north on the 19th, but "a shaft of the gun-carriage was broken in the afternoon" and necessarily an early camp was made. They were travelling up Monument Creek, and on the 20th they crossed the divide again, to the head of East Plum Creek, down which they proceeded to the South Platte, and to St. Vrain's Fort, where the resolute Fitzpatrick and his party were discovered encamped, all in good health, with the provisions husbanded and preserved with conscien-

[1] In one of the beautiful fiords of Norway the captain of our German ship sent a gang of men with a paint-pot to paint in white letters of enormous size high up on the cliffs the name of our vessel with the date, alongside others already there. I was astounded. My condemnation was intended to be silenced by the statement that the name of the Emperor's private yacht was placed there by his order.

Pike's Peak, Colorado
Altitude 14,111 feet
Seen through the Gateway to the Garden of the Gods
From the engraving on wood after a drawing by Thomas Moran, N.A.
In Dr. Hayden's Report for 1877

tious care. The indomitable Kit Carson had also arrived from Bent's Fort with ten good mules. Meat was the only thing lacking, but nevertheless all "fared luxuriously."

The Lieutenant here makes a peculiar statement: "I had been able to obtain no certain information in regard to the passes in this portion of the Rocky Mountain Range." This is incomprehensible when we do not forget that Kit Carson and Thomas Fitzpatrick who were with him knew the Rocky Mountain Range from one end to the other within the limits of what is now the United States, especially the part south of what is now Yellowstone Park. He further states that:

> The passes had always been represented as impracticable for carriages, but that the exploration of which was incidentally contemplated by my instructions with the view of finding some convenient point of passage for the road of emigration, which would enable it to reach, on a more direct line, the usual ford of the Great Colorado [Green River]—a place considered as determined by the nature of the country beyond that river. It is singular that, immediately at the foot of the mountains, I could find no one sufficiently acquainted with them to guide us to the plains at their western base; but the race of trappers who formerly lived in their recesses has almost entirely disappeared—dwindled to a few scattered individuals—some one or two of whom are regularly killed in the course of each year by the Indians.

Two of the best informed, most noted and skilful, of these men he now had in his party! He mentions that the Cheyennes who had accompanied him on the previous expedition up the Platte, had, shortly after, with a number of others, discovered a few trappers in the neighbouring mountains whom they murdered, although one, whom they knew, had been in the country thirty years. This seems at first glance a serious indictment of the Indian as base and

cruel, without even consideration for an old acquaintance, but it must be remembered that Frémont had only a second-hand version; and, furthermore, that some of these trappers for years had been systematically swindling the natives by getting them drunk, and buying their most valuable furs for a miserable measure of mixed alcohol and water; that they had often joined one tribe to make war on another for the fun of "shooting Indians"; that Walker and his men, of Bonneville's expedition, in their course down the Humboldt, had, for amusement, shot to death the innocent and frightened Indians right and left, and that some of the trappers were specially noted as "Indian Shooters."

The Indian was anything but perfect; yet, balancing the white intruder into his country with him, fairly, justly, without hatred or prejudice, either way, the Indian is found to be on the whole no less just and human; often more so. When Fitzpatrick was attacked and robbed some ten years before by one of the tribes, he unequivocally charged that the wealthy monopoly called the American Fur Company, for their own advantage, had instigated the depredations. General Ashley, to whom Fitzpatrick wrote this accusation, sent the letter to the Department of Indian Affairs, whose Superintendent at that period was the famous General William Clark, companion of Meriwether Lewis in the great first expedition to the mouth of the Columbia. The political abettor of the American Fur Company at this time was Senator Benton, and he was also a friend of General Clark. It required all his skill and influence to prevent the dissolution by Congress of the company because of several incidents, chief among which were the operation of a whiskey-still at one of their posts and the Fitzpatrick robbery. The Indians loved to get drunk; the Hudson Bay Company encouraged their drinking as they found it highly profitable to exchange alcohol and water for splendid furs; and the American Company asserted that they could not compete with the British without the like privilege to trade in

alcohol, which the United States Government had unequivocally and positively prohibited and was fighting with every available resource. Where great financial profit is involved the white man has seldom been backward in throwing to the winds all moral precepts. He is angelic only in his own conceit. After debauching the Indian, setting him like a bloodhound on the track of the enemy, political or commercial, he then sanctimoniously is shocked at treachery and brutality. As a fact the Indian was no more proficient in these base accomplishments than the European, and the history of North America bears out this statement over and over.

Frémont concluded to cut through the mountains by means of the valley of the Câche à la Poudre River northwestwardly, from near its junction with the South Platte, not far from the site of the present town of Greeley, Colorado, to the head of the Sweetwater and South Pass. To accomplish this with the least possible difficulty, he again divided his forces into two parts. One, under the management of the efficient and experienced Fitzpatrick, was to travel by practically the same route to Fort Laramie as was taken by the smaller division from this point the previous year, thence follow the Oregon Trail to the Hudson Bay Post of Fort Hall on Snake River, the post from which Wyeth was ousted. Along with this party went Alexander Godey, a young hunter of six or seven years' mountain experience, engaged to keep them in meat, the two Delawares having determined to go home. Of Godey, Frémont has only the highest commendation, comparing him with Carson, than which no praise was higher in the Far West at that time. With Frémont's own party was a Shoshone squaw, relict of a French "engagé" of Lupton's Fort who had been shot and killed. She wished to return to the land of her fathers and took this opportunity. As six pack-horses were required to transport her property, including a small tent which Frémont gave her, she had evidently prospered in the valley of the Platte.

Frémont's immediate company included Kit Carson, Preuss, Basil Lajeunesse, François Lajeunesse, Dodson the negro, Louis Zindel the artilleryman, and seven others besides himself, making fourteen in all. Before starting he took latitude and longitude observations, giving the position of St. Vrain this time, latitude 40° 16′ 33″ (52″ in his table) and longitude 105° 12′ 23″, with an altitude of 4930 feet. The actual longitude is about 104° 50′ 06″, and altitude 5120 feet (U. S. G. S.). On the afternoon of the 26th of July the parties separated to pursue their selected routes. The Platte was high from rains and melting snows in the mountains and Frémont had some difficulty in crossing. He soon came to Thompson Creek where he camped. From here he crossed north-westerly to the Câche à la Poudre, which he apparently reached below the mouth of Box Elder Creek. Fording the main stream on the morning of July 28th, they entered what Frémont, after the usage of the day, called the Black Hills, now the Laramie Mountains. The river was torrential, frequent crossings were necessary, and though it was only forty or fifty feet wide the declivity gave the current great force and the rocky bottom made footings precarious. A few miles above the site of Fort Collins, Colorado, they had to make a detour on account of a narrow canyon, marked on some old maps by a small settlement called La Porte. On the 30th they left the Câche à la Poudre and emerged from the mountains, camping at night near the boundary line between Colorado and Wyoming, which is the 41st parallel.

The last day of July, they kept westward very near the boundary, camping on Laramie River, in latitude 41° 15′ 02″, longitude 106° 16′ 54″. The longitude is actually about 105° 40′. He was now a few miles southwest of the present city of Laramie on the line of the Union Pacific Railway. If he could have foreseen the building of a railway across the continent, his and Senator Benton's cherished idea, by this route, much future

trouble would have been spared him, but the location of the first line was a long and difficult task of elimination. August 1st they travelled in an open country along the eastern foot of the Medicine Bow Range with no excitement but a buffalo bull chase and a brief encounter with a war party of about thirty Sioux and Cheyennes. At noon on August 2d they were on "the most western branch of Laramie River" which ought to be Four Mile Creek. There was here a large open bottom with many lodge poles lying about and nearby "three strong forts, that appeared to have been recently occupied."

The Shoshone woman at this place dug yampa roots, a favourite food of the natives wherever it grows, and Frémont was interested to make its acquaintance. He classes it as *Anethum graveolens.*[1] It is so abundant on one river tributary to the Green that the stream has been called by its name. Frémont says the Yampa River was also called Little Snake by the trappers but in this he seems to have been mistaken. Little Snake was, and still is, the name of a branch of the Yampa. The latter was called Bear River by the trappers, and it is marked on early maps by both names.[2] In 1871 when I saw the Yampa at its mouth, our party all spoke of it as Yampa or Bear River, the former name being put on our maps because it was the native name; there was, too, the other Bear River flowing into Salt Lake. Frémont placed the aboriginal name on his map, but nevertheless the trappers' name long persisted. The night of the 2d they camped on the "principal fork of Medicine Bow River," near Medicine Butte, probably not a great distance from the little town of Milo, Carbon County, Wyoming. His observations gave latitude 41° 37′ 16″ and longitude 106° 47′ 25″, with an altitude of 7800 feet above sea. The longitude is too far west.

[1] The *Handbook of American Indians* says the word is from the Ute Yámpă; in botany, *Carum gairdneri.*

[2] Farnham speaks of it as "Little Bear River," in 1839: *Travels in the Great Western Prairies*, N. Y., 1843.

The next day early they entered the pass of the Medicine Butte, through which led a broad trail, recently travelled by a very large party. There was some hard work getting through on account of ravines and dense groves of aspens. While the men were clearing a way Frémont took a meridional observation of the sun which gave his latitude position as 41° 35′ 48″. After reaching the plain bands of buffalo were seen and plenty of good buffalo meat gladdened the camp. Considerable difficulty was met with the following day in attempting to pass down a ravine after crossing the North Platte (which they did a few miles south of the Union Pacific Railway crossing to-day) and making an attempt to find a small stream a few miles higher up. They were obliged to camp in their tracks after dark at a point which, when daylight came, proved to be only a mile from the main river, to which they at once proceeded and went into camp, to jerk buffalo meat.

While all hands were engrossed in this occupation, except the horse guard, there was a sudden charge upon them of about seventy mounted Indians from beyond some low hills. The shrill war-whoop resounded and the scene immediately was one of violent activity. The horse guard having noticed an Indian's head cautiously lifted above a hill crest was able at once to turn the horses into camp. The explorers sprang to the defensive and the redoubtable howitzer was trained on the rapidly approaching enemy, who, as they rode near, agreeably surprised the defenders by quick signs of peace. This was accepted by the whites, of course, and the raiders then explained that they had charged under the impression that it was a camp of hostiles, only discovering the mistake on close approach. Frémont did not believe them but he was willing to accept the excuse for what it was worth. He thought the sight of the howitzer had changed their minds. "The pipe went round, provisions were spread, and the tobacco and goods furnished the customary presents." They were a defeated war party of Arapahos and

Cheyennes, returning from an expedition against some Shoshones camped near the fort which Jim Bridger had recently established on Black's Fork of Green River.[1] An attack had been made on this village during the absence of its warriors and a number of horses and several scalps secured. The marauders were pursued, lost their stolen horses except some belonging to the whites, and several men killed. A number also were wounded. Near sunset the disgruntled band departed, much to the relief of Frémont, who however kept his men on the lookout for their return.

The observations at this camp gave the position as latitude 41° 36′ 00″, longitude 107° 22′ 27″, and altitude 6820 feet. They were now entering upon that singular, barren plateau which forms the Continental Divide at this point, the same region that Robert Stuart traversed in 1812 after coming through South Pass, a region where the few streams belong to neither one side nor the other but lose themselves in the sand. Travelling over this ill-watered district was irksome when a valley with good water lay close at the north, and Frémont, near the present town of Rawlins, Wyoming, turned his course directly north towards the Sweetwater. On August 9th they reached at noon what is now called Muddy Creek, which cuts through the mountains bordering the Sweetwater Valley on the south, and that night they camped on the familiar river, about twenty miles above the Devil's Gate.

They were now once more on the travelled road, such as it was, the Oregon Trail, a "broad smooth highway where the heavy waggons of the emigrants had entirely beaten and crushed the artemisia." This, Frémont continues, was a "happy exchange to our poor animals for the sharp rocks and tough shrubs, . . . and we moved up the valley rapidly

[1] Frémont says Ham's Fork but this was a mistake. Bridger in a letter to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., Dec. 10, 1843, says: "I have established a small fort with a blacksmith shop . . . on Black's Fork of Green River." See Chittenden's *Fur Trade*, p. 972.

and pleasantly." By the evening of the 12th they were at the point where the road turned off to cross to the "plains" of Green River; to what was known in trapper days as Green River Valley. They entered upon the waters of the Pacific Slope by a route farther south than on the former trip, and "very near Table Mountain at the southern extremity of South Pass, which is near twenty miles in width and already traversed by several roads." Frémont wrote these words in his second report, and in his first was equally explicit, as to the travel on the road before he came, and yet he was hotly charged later with claiming to be the discoverer of South Pass! It was over the south part of the Pass, close to Table Mountain, that I surmise Robert Stuart came, before swinging to the south-east and then almost paralleling the Sweetwater Valley about twenty miles away till he struck the North Platte.

Frémont's barometrical observation gave him 7490 feet as the altitude of the Pass as against his figures of 7000 of the previous year. The altitude as established by railway survey (F. E. & M. V. Ry) is 7397. He gives much data concerning distances, etc., because of its "importance as the great gate through which commerce and travelling may hereafter pass between the valley of the Mississippi and the North Pacific," but this now is of little general interest. The engineers of the Union Pacific Railway, with Jim Bridger's help, found a lower and better pass and when the iron rails spanned from the North Platte to Bitter Creek, South Pass as a highway was forgotten. If Frémont had continued westward from where he crossed the North Platte on this expedition he would have gone over the very route of the future Union Pacific to Green River, and he might have noticed its adaptability for a railway; it was such a route as he was looking for on subsequent journeys.

From South Pass he went down the Sandy, tributary of Green River, and on the 15th of August camped in Mexican territory on the left bank of the Green sixty-nine miles

from South Pass in longitude according to his observation 110° 05′ 05″ and latitude 41° 53′ 54″, on the emigrant road to Oregon, "which bears much to the southward to avoid the mountains about the heads of Green River—the *Rio Verde* of the Spaniards." This is the only statement I know of that Green River was once called *Rio Verde*. It is generally believed to have been named after some trapper, but there is uncertainty about the origin of its present title, whether from the color of the water, the verdure on its banks, or from a person. Spanish River was one name for it in the earliest times. The Crows called it Seedskeedee Agie, or Prairie-hen River. Frémont is now in the midst of the great rendezvous of the fur-traders, trappers, and Indians of the preceding two decades: Green River Valley. The river here abounded in grassy bottom-lands with beautiful groves of huge cottonwoods; and with the abundance of excellent water, the valley was an ideal camp-ground, summer or winter. The particular locality selected for the annual meeting or "rendezvous" was a place where the river for two or three miles was bordered by specially wide bottoms luxuriant with grass. If I am correct in identifying it this favourite stretch lay just north of where the Union Pacific Railway crosses the stream. Towering above the landscape on the east side of the river is the line of cliffs terminating in a huge monumental butte, just above the town of Green River, made famous by the delightful pictures of Thomas Moran, for he painted a number of this subject.

Here Carson, Fitzpatrick, Sublette, Bridger, Smith, Ashley, and all the rest of that remarkable set, had often congregated in the twenty years gone by, and here Carson had the duel on horseback with the profligate bully Shuman, whom he wounded, and here also many an exciting incident bloody and otherwise had been witnessed that has found no record. In the fur-hunting period this valley of Green River was probably the most noted locality in all the central region. In 1871, at the time of my first visit, one, at least,

of the old-timers was still resident there, a squaw-man of French descent named Gebow. Unfortunately it did not then occur to me to get any of his tales. The extent of the valley was from 43°, south to the Uinta Mountains, about 140 miles, with a mean width of about 70 miles, the river flowing from north to south through the middle.

The valley terminates on the south abruptly, where the river cuts sharply into the flanks of the Uinta Mountains, and is thereafter canyoned for a thousand miles, with two or three short openings. Frémont speaks of the river's "foaming course among its lofty precipices" as described by trappers, and says "no trappers have been found bold enough to undertake a voyage which has so certain a prospect of fatal termination." It was, however, attempted by General Ashley in 1825, again by William Manley in 1849, and by one or two other parties, but the first complete and successful descent was by Major Powell in 1869, with a second journey in 1871–72 which I accompanied.[1] Frémont touches the river again at several points but he seems never to have entertained an idea of exploring it. He now proceeds to Salt Lake and explores that remarkable body of water.

[1] For information on the Green and Colorado Rivers, see *The Romance of the Colorado River* and *A Canyon Voyage*, by F. S. Dellenbaugh; *Report on the Exploration of the Colorado of the West*, by J. W. Powell; *In and Around the Grand Canyon*, by George Wharton James; and works by C. E. Dutton and Wm. M. Davis.

CHAPTER VII

GREEN RIVER VALLEY TO SALT LAKE

Jim Bridger at Salt Lake—Frémont Crosses to Bear River—The Famous Beer Spring—"Digger" Indians—Vegetarians Despised—Range of the American Bison and Its Extermination—Afloat on Bear River—Camp Near Ogden, Utah—Navigation of Salt Lake—Disappointment Island—Swimming in Brine—Brigham Young's Accusations.

WHEN Escalante, in 1776, made his remarkable *entrada*, from Santa Fé to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, he came very near discovering that unusual body of water. He turned south, however, from Utah Lake and left the discovery for the American trappers. It has been claimed that Etienne Provost, who was very early in the Rocky Mountains, was the first white man to reach the lake, about 1820, and it is quite possible that this is so, but Jim Bridger, then in Ashley's employ, is given the honour in the winter of 1824–25, and apparently Provost had not mentioned a salt lake to him, for when he arrived at its shores, he was astonished to find the water salt when he, with some other trappers, dismounted to get a drink. "They all spit out the water and Bridger exclaimed, 'Hell, we are on the shore of the Pacific!' From where they stood looking south-west no land appeared beyond the lake horizon but Strawberry Island."[1] Captain E. L. Berthoud, from one of whose letters to me I quote the foregoing, knew Bridger well, and he states further that he believed that

[1] The usual version of Bridger's discovery of Salt Lake is, that in the winter of 1824–25 he was chosen to decide a bet between two of the trappers encamped on Bear River, as to where it emptied, and in tracing the river down he came to

when Bridger was consulted as to facts he was truth itself, but that when he wished to tell stories as stories he was most skilful. "One of his amusing tales was that the water of Fire Hole River fell so swiftly that the water got heated by friction!" The idea that Salt Lake might be an arm of the Pacific was not dispelled till the spring of 1826 when four of General Ashley's trappers circumnavigated it in a skin canoe.

Captain Bonneville, according to Irving, had set his heart on thoroughly exploring this strange body of water, and not being able to direct his personal attention to the task, he delegated it to his chief assistant Joe Walker, and on July 24, 1833, that expert hunter and trapper started with a large party, to make a complete circuit and examination. Others have asserted that the desire to have the lake explored was an afterthought. The Walker party got demoralised on the desert and were so pressed for drinking water that they struck for some snowy mountains to secure it, and in this way fell upon the head of what Frémont is later to name Humboldt River, then vaguely known as Ogden's, and they made their way west by its valley to and across the Sierra Nevada down to Monterey, where they passed a jolly winter with the Mexicans. Walker we shall find later going over a similar route with Frémont. His journey of 1833 was the second by a white man across the Great Basin, Jedediah Smith's having been the first, in May and June, 1827.

On August 16, 1843, the expedition, by an easy ford, crossed the Green from their camp just above the mouth of the Sandy, and after following down the right bank for seven or eight miles through refreshing groves of cottonwood, the regular trail, they halted for noon in latitude 41° 46′ 54″ near some old houses which had formed a trad-

Salt Lake. It is quite likely that some of the others went with him, which would harmonise this tale which he told Berthoud. The whole camp believed the salt water to be an arm of the sea, until 1826 as noted.

ing-post. The altitude was determined to be 6320 feet. The altitude of the Union Pacific Railway crossing a few miles below is 6082 feet, and the mouth of the Sandy is 6240. In the afternoon the Oregon Trail led them south-westward from the Green, and in twenty-six miles they arrived at what Frémont took to be Black's Fork, but which in reality was Ham's Fork a little above its junction with the Black; that is a short distance from the present town of Granger on the Union Pacific. This mistake is what caused him in his narrative to place Fort Bridger on Ham's Fork instead of where it was, on Black's Fork. These streams meander a good deal and are very much alike.

"The heavy waggons," he says, "have so completely pulverised the soil that clouds of fine, light dust are raised by the slightest wind, making the road sometimes very disagreeable." This dust probably explains why he does not mention the splendid view to be had along here of the Uinta Mountains. There is hardly anything more uncomfortable than travelling on one of these Western roads when deep with this pulverised dirt, fine as flour, flying on the breeze, or enveloping the outfit in a suffocating cloud all day long; especially in very hot weather, when it "cakes" upon one's face and eyes. It indicated the great amount of travel toward Oregon for free land and free air at this early date, due largely to the efforts of Senators Benton and Linn, and the others of the Western contingent who were determined to settle the country as an aid to rescuing it from the British. The price was scalps, graves by the way, and much hardship, but at last Oregon was won, and these men, women, and children with superb courage and stamina won it.

On August 17th, in nine miles, after crossing Ham's Fork (he says Black's) they arrived at Black's Fork (the Ham's Fork of his narrative), still on the regular Oregon Trail, which made a detour to the south to reach Bridger's establishment where rest and repairs could be had. Frémont did not go nearer than "a mile or two" to Bridger's where the

Shoshone woman departed, to join her relatives. On the 19th Carson was sent ahead to Fort Hall to return with a small amount of provisions, while Frémont should go to Salt Lake, the party being now very low in supplies. They also had lost six or seven animals and Frémont hoped to supply their places as he proceeded. The trail he followed as nearly as I can trace it crossed the Muddy Fork of the Black, to Little Muddy, passing Cumberland of to-day, and from its head followed about the line of the Wyoming Western Railway. He obtained an observation at noon on the 20th which placed them in latitude 41° 39′ 45″. Apparently this would put him on the north fork of the Little Muddy, three or four miles south of the present town of Glencoe, Wyoming. Early maps, including Frémont's, are so defective in details of the topography of this locality that it is difficult to place the route with precision. It is not the course of the Oregon Trail of later years, which followed up Ham's Fork and went down by Sublette's Creek to the Bear River Valley, but as Frémont was on the Trail the change came later, unless this then was a cut-off. The main Trail did not come so far south as Bridger's fort originally, and doubtless as early as Frémont's journey had not yet settled down to the best route. They kept on up the creek to a steep climb to a pass with an altitude of 8230 feet above the sea, and before camping went down the other side a distance, to the head of a branch of the Bear which he calls on his map Muddy Creek, but which must have been Twin Creek, on the route of the Oregon Short Line Railway, not far from the present town of Fossil.[1]

In about four miles he came out into the main valley of Bear River, here three or four miles wide, and proceeded north, down the valley, halting for noon in about eight

[1] Named from the great abundance here of remarkably preserved fish and vegetable remains found in the shales. Frémont discovered them on the way over and regretted he could not stop several days. Similar ones are found nearer Green River—I picked them out of a railway cut in 1871.

miles more; and for night camping about two miles south of Smith's Fork; two miles south of the present Cokeville. An observation fixed this camp in latitude 42° 03′ 47″, which is correct, and longitude 111° 10′ 47″, which is a trifle too far west, Bear River at this point being east of 111°. During the day they had passed an emigrant family travelling alone, which interested Frémont very much as indicating a better attitude of the Indians. They were now out of Mexican territory for the time being, as the 42d parallel was the boundary, and, he remarks, in the limits of the United States; but this would depend on how one regarded the status of the Oregon question.

We were now entering [he says] a region which for us possessed a strange and extraordinary interest. We were upon the waters of the famous lake which forms a salient point among the remarkable geographical features of the country, and around which the vague and superstitious accounts of the trappers had thrown a delightful obscurity, which we anticipated pleasure in dispelling, but which, in the meantime, left a crowded field for the exercise of our imagination.

In our occasional conversations with the few old hunters who had visited the region, it had been a subject of frequent speculation; and the wonders which they related were not the less agreeable because they were highly exaggerated and impossible.

Hitherto this lake had been seen only by trappers who were wandering through the country in search of new beaver-streams, caring very little for geography; its islands had never been visited; and none were to be found who had entirely made the circuit of its shores; and no instrumental observations or geographical survey, of any description, had ever been made anywhere in the neighbouring region. It was generally supposed that it had no visible outlet; but among the trappers, including those in my own camp, were many who believed that somewhere on its surface was a terrible whirlpool, through which its waters found their way to the ocean by some subterranean communication. All these things had made a frequent subject of discussion in our desultory conversations around the fires at

night; and my own mind had become tolerably well filled with their indefinite pictures, and insensibly coloured with their romantic descriptions, which, in the pleasure of excitement, I was well disposed to believe, and half expected to realise.

The route held steadily down the beautiful valley on the present route of the Oregon Short Line Railway, at a general elevation for this part of about 6400 feet, past (Jedediah) Smith's Fork and Thomas's Fork (evidently they did not know about Bear Lake), and on the 23d of August they passed more emigrants, large parties, the men and women and children who were to found new states on the shores of the Pacific. They also came upon several Shoshone Indians whose camp was not far off; a large village just down from the mountains. Frémont resolved to visit them. When he arrived within a mile of the village a single horseman emerged from it at full speed, followed quickly by others till the whole plain was filled with them, "charging down upon us with guns and naked swords, lances and bows-and-arrows; Indians entirely naked, and warriors fully dressed for war, with the long red streamers of their war-bonnets reaching nearly to the ground, all mingled together in a bravery of savage warfare." This great excitement he soon discovered was caused by the flag he bore, which was an emblem of war with the Sioux when they came this way on a raid. An understanding was speedily reached, and the explorers made their camp, at a place indicated by the chief, near his own lodge. Eight horses were bought for blankets, beads, etc., to take the place of those which had died. Some berries, roots, and seeds were also purchased, among them an edible root called kooyah or tobacco root (*Valeriana edulis*) which had so singular a taste and odour that Preuss was driven out of camp by his repugnance to them.

The tribes west of the Rocky Mountains relied for food very considerably on grass seeds, roots, nuts of the pinyon, cactus fruits, and so on, and for that reason have often

been spoken of in terms of contempt by the whites, who admired the meat eating of the Sioux and other plains tribes and seemed for some reason to consider it a disgrace to eat seeds and roots and fruits, yet our own diet is composed to the extent probably of 75 per cent of a similar diet. Wheat is only a grass seed, also oats and rye; potatoes are such roots as these Indians used, and our tomatoes are no more dignified than cactus "apples" (prickly pear), and so on. Some of the grass seeds, notably one the Pai Utes eat called "Ahk," it seemed to me would have been valuable for cultivation had we not possessed others that were better.

The Sioux ate meat because there were plenty of buffalo to furnish it; it was their resource. The tribes beyond the Rocky Mountains eked out their deer and rabbit supply (the buffalo had gone as far as Green River and the head of the Snake, but by 1843 had ceased going there) by utilising the numerous very good seeds and roots, nuts and fruits, of their environment. They should be admired for wresting these things from a reluctant nature. Some of their progenitors practised irrigation and grew fine crops of maize long before the white man saw the continent; for the Moki (Hopi) are classed linguistically as Shoshonean and they and their ancestors have been farmers for many centuries. Therefore, when a tribe does not live entirely by the chase, it is hardly becoming in us to sneer at them, and consider them, because of a preponderating vegetable diet, the lowest beings on earth. I have known many Pai Utes, and they seemed to me, in spite of their leaning perforce to a vegetable diet, at least for portions of the year, to be quite as intelligent as most of the beings called human. But altogether the white man has not only generally been unjust in his estimate of the Indian and Indian character, but he has been foolish and irrational as well. Frémont, I am happy to say, seems to have been always very fair in his statements and estimates of the tribes he met with, though he also is biassed a trifle on the food question, thinking exclusive meat eaters a supe-

rior class. "Roots, seeds, and grass, every vegetable that affords any nourishment, and every living animal thing, insect or worm, they eat. Nearly approaching to the lower animal creation, their sole employment is to obtain food; and they are constantly occupied in a struggle to support existence." As if the food quest had not from the beginning been the man-animal's chief struggle; as if millions to-day are no more than pack-horses merely to obtain sustenance! As for eating worms, snails are common food in Europe, and I have seen ladies at the dinner table pick them out of the shells with relish. We eat shrimps, to match the red man's grasshoppers, and the bill of fare may thus be paralleled all along the line. Furthermore there are some who claim that butchering animals and eating them is not the most desirable form of subsistence, nor yet the highest, and for law and order within his own precincts the American Indian could shame the white man.

At the most northern point which Bear River reaches, just before it makes its sudden bend to the south to complete its great horseshoe, are some remarkable soda springs.[1] Frémont came to them on the 25th of August and with his usual painstaking methods he stopped for examination. There are many springs here charged with carbonate of lime and of magnesia, and with the sulphates of these and their chlorides, according to Frémont's analysis which was quoted as late as 1877 in one of Dr. Hayden's reports. Many of the springs come up from the bottom of the river with such force that they bubble several inches above the surface, at least Farnham, in 1839, said so, but the most noted is near the margin of the water, a miniature geyser of hot water shooting up to a maximum height of three feet. Dr. Peale, in 1877, says two feet. It is accompanied by a subterranean noise which so suggested a steamboat that it was called Steamboat Spring, as, indeed, Frémont says it had been

[1] Most of the springs are cold. The Steamboat had a temperature of 88° F. according to Peale (1877) and 87° F. according to Frémont.

Soda and Beer Springs on Bear River, Idaho
The Steamboat Spring is on the opposite bank where the man is standing
Photograph by W. H. Jackson, about 1877

before his visit. Farnham says, "what is called The Steamboat Spring."[1]

Bonneville visited the locality and described the Beer Springs as tasting like that Teutonic beverage. He said his men were exceedingly fond of the water, but the Indians would not drink it and tried to dissuade the men from doing so as they considered it injurious. Frémont's observations gave the position as latitude 42° 39′ 57″, longitude 111° 46′ 00″, with an altitude of 5840 feet. The Oregon Short Line gives 5779 feet. Not far beyond the Beer Springs, the regular Oregon Trail turned to the west, heading for the Portneuf River and Fort Hall, but Frémont, though almost out of provisions, had no idea of giving up his intention of surveying Salt Lake, or at least making a careful examination of it. His energy and endurance appear always to have been equal to any task, and he was never seeking an easy job. To make the prospects for food a trifle brighter he dispatched one of the men named Lee to Fort Hall with a note telling Carson to come on as fast as possible with a pack-horse laden with whatever he could secure in the way of supplies.

Fortune threw in their way two well-grown calves, lost by some emigrant party, and as no owner could be discovered for them in the caravans which were passed, they were driven along as reserve food with which to make the prospective circumnavigation of the Salt Lake. They were soon obliged to kill one to satisfy the pressing necessity for something to eat. Indians were met occasionally but they were poorly supplied with food, and were no great help in this respect, especially as the men were unaccustomed to a pure root diet. Cutting across some ridges the party descended on August 26th to the river again, their noon halt having been opposite Sheep Rock, the extreme end of the high ridge around which Bear River makes the turn to the south, in a rugged canyon of basalt. At sunset camp was

[1] *Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and Oregon Territory*, by Thomas J. Farnham, 1843.

made on the right bank of the river opposite three lodges of Snake (Shoshone) Indians from whom more of their roots were obtained, among which was one of sweet, pleasant taste, which Frémont afterwards found was the famous "kamas" of the Columbia Valley. There was little which escaped the keen, intelligent observation of this explorer, and he always presents clear, sensible descriptions. He has often been adversely criticised for many things, frequently with no foundation in fact, but he is seldom given the full credit which ought to be his for the close, indefatigable attention he applied to all things which fell within his pathway on his expeditions.

The Lieutenant was not set on following any particular trail and on the 28th he left one they had been on for some time as they worked their way down the river valley, and which he thought would probably have led by a good road to Salt Lake, and crossing some deep ravines, in about an hour came to the river again in "a valley about five or six miles wide, between mountain ranges, which, about thirty miles below, appeared to close up and terminate the valley, leaving for the river only a very narrow pass or cañon, behind which we imagined that we should find the broad waters of the lake"; in other words he was in the head of Cache Valley, but the place where he thought the river left the valley probably was the entrance into it of Little Bear River. Bear River itself when half-way through the valley swings sharply to the north-west and cleaves a way through mountains which Frémont could not see from his position.

On August 29th they met with a small party of Shoshones on another trail which they had discovered (these were the old Indian highways of course), who, by signs, indicated that it was a good trail leading into a broad valley which ran southward. They found it as the Shoshones had said. It led through a pass they called Standing Rock because of a large rock which stood upright near the middle of the stream at the entrance, in latitude 42° 07′ 18″. Coming into a more

open country they at length saw a Shoshone village and stopped for a time to trade with the people. An observation gave latitude 42° 14′ 22″.

The band had no game, and not a great stock of roots, and Frémont would not tempt them to sell what they had, feeling that they had more need for food than he. He makes some interesting and valuable remarks concerning the range of the buffalo at this point in his report, and speaks of the extraordinary rapidity with which the buffalo were then disappearing owing to the vast scale of destruction by the fur hunters. The fur companies annually traded in 90,000 skins, and this represented only a part of those killed.

With inconsiderable exceptions, the business of the American trading-post is carried on in their skins; every year the Indian villages make new lodges, for which the skin of the buffalo furnishes the material; and in that portion of the country where they are still found, the Indians derive their entire support from them, and slaughter them with a thoughtless and abominable extravagance. Like the Indians themselves, they have been a characteristic of the Great West; and as, like them, they are visibly diminishing, it will be interesting to throw a glance backward through the last twenty years, and give some account of their former distribution through the country, and the limit of their western range.

The information is derived principally from Mr. Fitzpatrick, supported by my own personal knowledge and acquaintance with the country. Our knowledge does not go farther back than the spring of 1824, at which time the buffalo were spread in immense numbers over the Green River and Bear River valleys, and through all the country lying between the Colorado, or Green river of the Gulf of California, and Lewis's fork of the Columbia river; the meridian of Fort Hall then forming the western limit of their range. The buffalo then remained for many years in that country, and frequently moved down the valley of the Columbia, on both sides of the river as far as the *Fishing Falls*. Below this point they never descended in any numbers. About the year 1834 or 1835 they began to diminish

very rapidly, and continued to decrease until 1838 or 1840, when, with the country we have just described, they entirely abandoned all the waters of the Pacific north of Lewis's fork of the Columbia. At that time, the Flathead Indians were in the habit of finding their buffalo on the heads of Salmon river, and other streams of the Columbia; but now they never meet with them farther west than the three forks of the Missouri, or the plains of the Yellow-stone river.

Escalante killed buffalo on Green River in 1776, and what is undoubtedly a pictograph of a buffalo was found on a cliff wall in Southern Utah near the Arizona line, evidence, perhaps, that they once reached as far west as the place where it was discovered near the town of Kanab. They never extended so far to the westward in the basin of the Colorado, Frémont believes, as in the valley of the Columbia. His observations and conclusions on this subject are so valuable that I quote further:

In travelling through the country west of the Rocky mountains, observation readily led me to the impression that the buffalo had, for the first time, crossed that range to the waters of the Pacific only a few years prior to the period we are considering; and in this opinion I am sustained by Mr. Fitzpatrick, and the older trappers in that country. In the region west of the Rocky mountains, we never meet with any of the ancient vestiges which, throughout all the country lying upon their eastern waters, are found in the *great highways*, continuous for hundreds of miles, always several inches, and sometimes several feet in depth, which the buffalo have made in crossing from one river to another, or in traversing the mountain ranges. The Snake Indians, more particularly those low down upon Lewis's fork, have always been very grateful to the American trappers, for the great kindness (as they frequently expressed it) which they did to them, in driving the buffalo so low down the Columbia river.

To-day this once numerous animal can be found only in several private herds, or sparsely in the extreme wilds

of North-western Canada. The hide hunters and the settling of the Western country terminated its existence. When conditions change, when environment changes, life forms change with them; species arise, flourish, and disappear on the plastic surface of the globe.

The Indians informed Frémont that he would arrive at the big salt water in "two sleeps" travelling south, but the trail they were on turning sharply to the northward, he continued on it, thinking that eventually it would lead them right. On the last day of August they came to the Roseaux or Reed River, now on the maps as the Malade. The trail had been taking them toward Fort Hall but they then did not know it. The noon halt was in latitude 41° 59′ 31″, with an altitude of 4670 feet. They turned south and followed down the Roseaux, disappointed at every little rise not to see the lake, but they travelled a considerable distance southward between the Roseaux and the Bear before they began to distinguish some isolated mountains resembling islands, which they were afterward found to be. The party camped on September 1st about three hundred yards above the junction of the Roseaux with the Bear.

As on the first expedition, Frémont had an india-rubber boat eighteen feet long, the sides formed of two air cylinders connected with others forming the bow and stern. This they now inflated and ferried the party across the Roseaux (Malade River), which was too deep to ford. Expecting in the course of the day to come to the lake, Frémont got into the boat, when the goods were safely over, and with Basil Lajeunesse paddled down Bear River, the others proceeding as usual. The river was deep and wide with a slow current. Progress was not what Frémont wished it to be. They surprised at one place several families of "Root Diggers" (Utes) and soon made friends with them, and Frémont promised to send back some men with goods to trade.

A short distance below this, it was determined to aban-

don the circumlocutory river and strike for the caravan. The boat and effects were hidden on the bank and the two men started across the low flats to which the preceding arable plain at this point changed. They had walked fifteen miles following the track of their party, and the sun was going down, before they caught sight of the camp-fires. Those who have never been in this situation can hardly appreciate the wonderful cheer of the red blaze in the distance when it means rest, food, and friends. Frémont, who was always imaginative even with his scientific temperament, remarks on this cheering quality and says that to them, in their present situation, "after a hard march in a region of novelty, approaching the debouches of a river, in a lake of almost fabulous reputation, it was doubly so."

Men were sent back for the boat next day, and in the afternoon they went on three miles down Bear River. They were getting into the marshes. All was so low and flat with dense rushes and canes and willows that they could not see more than a few yards at a time. Thousands of water-fowl flew about; at the sound of a gun rising "with a noise like distant thunder." The river spread into several branches and a camp had to be made, which had the compensation of a bountiful supper of ducks, geese, and plover, but I may say that if the geese were as tough as some of the species I have tried to eat, they were a treat only to the starving. With his customary energy Frémont got an observation at night, with the result of latitude 41° 30′ 22″, which is very close, and longitude 112° 19′ 30″. The longitude of the mouth of the river scaled from a map is 112° 30′, but they were not yet at the mouth. The next morning, September 4th, Kit Carson, with the ordered supplies, rode into the camp. How did he find it? It was easy: as he knew where they were heading for, all he had to do to come to their exact location was to keep on east from Fort Hall till he met with their trail. Even a blind man could follow such a trail as this large party made, and the track of that

precious cannon would surely identify it even had there been in the country another party of this character. Fitzpatrick had not yet reached Fort Hall; the guest-traveller Dwight had, and was going on to Vancouver; and provisions were scarce: this was the news.

They returned five miles up the Bear and with difficulty crossed the animals to the left or east bank. The men were put over in the boat. They were now certain of the close proximity of the lake but still could see nothing of its water, and turned their course in the direction of an isolated butte or mountain perceived twelve miles south, from which they expected to get a view. They speedily got into the mud-flats and were obliged to make for higher ground on the east, at the foot of the Wasatch, where the lake runs rather close against it. Here they came upon a good trail, the regular Indian highway which invariably existed all over the Far West in the most advantageous positions. If Frémont had induced one of the despised "Diggers" to come with him as guide he could have saved himself all this wallowing in the mire, but even if he had wanted to, he might not have been able to persuade one. Sometimes Indians would not go with a party on any terms, but they would nearly always, in the sign language, indicate the best way, and it then remained for the traveller to follow the sign directions—not always successfully.

The party soon came to the Hot Springs, five or six miles north of the present city of Ogden. Here the trail turned to the left to go up a river, coming through a canyon which even then is mentioned as Weber's Fork, so he turned toward the lake which still he had not seen. It was not before the morning of September 6th, when he tried again to reach the solitary butte, that he got his first view of the fascinating spread of water. "We reached the butte without any difficulty, and ascending to the summit, immediately at our feet beheld the object of our anxious search—the waters of the inland Sea stretching in still and solitary grandeur far

beyond the limit of our vision." And here his enthusiasm leads him to make a remark for which, afterwards, he was ridiculed by a certain historian. He says: "It was one of the great points of the exploration: and as we looked eagerly over the lake in the first emotions of excited pleasure, I am doubtful if the followers of Balboa felt more enthusiasm when, from the heights of the Andes, they saw for the first time the Great Western Ocean." He was accused of ridiculously likening himself to Balboa, but it is clear that what he said was modest and entirely proper and that he had no thought of a comparison.

The lake was practically unexplored and its characteristics unknown. No scientific man before Frémont had visited its shores. His pleasure at the novelty of the situation was justifiable. "To travellers," he continues, "so long shut up among mountain ranges a sudden view over the expanse of silent waters had in it something sublime." They found it necessary to make their exploration base on Weber's Fork, as no place nearer the lake was suitable. A corral was built on the edge of the river for the animals, and a small timber fort for those who were to remain on guard. The rubber boat was made ready. The extra provisions Carson had brought were now consumed, which rendered it desirable to reduce the company, and seven men were immediately sent on to Fort Hall. They lost their way, scattered, and finally straggled in from every direction and distance, some picked up and guided to safety by Indians.

Preuss, Carson, Bernier, and Basil Lajeunesse were those chosen to go with Frémont on the boat expedition, "the first," says Frémont, "ever attempted on this inland sea." In this matter he was mistaken. He did not know that four of Ashley's men, as already stated, circumnavigated the lake in the spring of 1826. It was now found that the boat was not as strong as that they had used on the Platte, being only pasted instead of sewed together. This gave the prospective navigation of deep water a decidedly serious

aspect. To make the tour of Salt Lake to-day, in a good boat, would be nothing. It is the first exploratory event, that which has in it the element of mystery, which is difficult. Nobody knows. When everybody knows, correct action is easy, although it may consist in doing exactly the hard work the first party did. The boat went pleasantly down the river, but it was discovered that two of the air tanks leaked so badly that the efforts of one man at the air-pump were required to keep the craft afloat. Progress was not rapid and a camp was necessary before arriving at the mouth of the river, which they did the next day, September 9th, 1843, only to find the channel so shallow that they were obliged to get overboard and drag the boat along over the mud into which they sank up to their knees, thereby stirring up the ooze, which had a disagreeable odour.

At length they came suddenly to a small black ridge on the bottom, beyond which the water was immediately salt, deepening gradually with a firm sandy bottom. Climbing on board, they pushed out on the wide waters of the, to them, unknown inland sea. There was a considerable swell on, with patches of white foam drifting southward to recall the whirlpool stories. The water became deep and clear green. The spray that dashed in turned to a crust of salt at once. A strong breeze came up the lake. White caps were formed. The boat was slow but rode well. One man kept the bellows (air pump) going to keep the cylinders inflated, and at last a successful landing was effected on an island, for which they had headed, now perpetuating the event by bearing the name of Frémont. He called it Disappointment Island, because he found it desert instead of fertile as he had expected.

They ascended to the summit of the island, a bare rocky peak 800 feet above the level of the lake surface, which Frémont fixed at 4200 feet above the sea, 4218 being the figures of to-day. From here he obtained a very fair idea of the configuration of the shores of the lake and he made a

map which is not far wrong. He longed to thoroughly explore the lake, and the neighbouring country, but the time allowed for his travels, as well as his food supply, would not permit. A camp was made on the island, where they spent the night, and Frémont took observations for latitude and longitude. With large cheery fires they made themselves comfortable, and "lay down, for the first time in a long journey, in perfect security." The night was clear but a rising wind caused a roaring surf to pound against the beach, and altogether Frémont marks this down as one of the most interesting nights of the whole expedition.

In the morning the surf was still breaking heavily, the lake was "dark and agitated," and they got off as soon as possible, though Frémont did not forget to take a bucket of the water far from land dilution with him from which to make salt. He also made several soundings as they went, but as the paddling had to stop, causing loss of headway, he concluded not to add the extra labour to what was already severe for those working the boat. At last they made a landing immediately under the butte from which their first view of the lake was obtained, just in time for Frémont to climb to its summit, 500 feet above the lake, for a meridian observation. Preuss and Lajeunesse set off for the camp, nine miles away, the latter to fetch horses to transport the boat and utensils. The gale increased, and it was fortunate that, with their crazy vessel, they had succeeded in making the crossing from the island while the waters were yet comparatively calm. On September 11th they remained in camp and Frémont boiled down his pail of salt water, getting from the five gallons, fourteen pints of very fine white salt, a portion of which was analysed, showing 97.80% of common salt (sodium chloride). The rest was chloride of calcium, chloride of magnesia, sulphate of soda, and 1.12% of sulphate of lime.

It is impossible for the human body to sink in the waters of Great Salt Lake but nevertheless it is highly dangerous to go beyond one's depth on account of the possibility of

strangling. A single, unexpected mouthful of the brine might undo a good swimmer, and as for non-swimmers, they are as likely to float feet up as any other way. Indeed it is difficult to keep one's equilibrium and swimming in ordinary sea water is much simpler. The first time I bathed in Salt Lake was in 1876, at Black Rock, where two or three rough dressing shanties had been built, each supplied with a pail of fresh water to dash off the salt, which if allowed to dry on one's skin is uncomfortable. When I visited the lake the last time, in 1907, I found an extensive bathing establishment at Saltair, twenty miles from Salt Lake City. It is a great resort. As nobody's head can be allowed to go under water, the men who are smokers enjoy a cigar while bathing. There is another bathing establishment at Garfield. The lake fluctuates in depth and extent, in cycles. The area is fifty miles by about seventy-five, or about 1750 square miles.[1] The Southern Pacific Railway now cuts across from near Frémont's base camp to the tip of Promontory Point and thence across the west arm due west on a high trestlework, the water in places being forty feet deep. Part of the way is on filling of earth and rock.

One of the plans of the expedition had now been fulfilled; the mysterious salt sea had been visited, navigated, examined to some extent, and its water tested. While the time was all too short for anything like a careful exploration, nevertheless a scientist had now viewed it, estimated it, and marked it down on paper. It was Frémont's description of the lake and valley which led to a very important event in the development of this region. Brigham Young, because of this description, determined in 1847 to lead his followers, the Mormons, or Latter Day Saints, into this then foreign territory and set up for themselves the State of Deseret. And here came in an important charge of great error in one of Frémont's statements. Brigham said that

[1] See the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., article "Great Salt Lake," for an excellent description.

Frémont described the lake as being in one part salt and in another fresh, and that he made a mistake in this, having come to Utah Lake and believed it to be a part of Salt Lake, which Frémont denied.[1] Brigham also complained that Frémont called it a fertile country when it was in reality a desert. The answer to this is the aspect of Salt Lake Valley to-day: a rich garden in the midst of the mountains.

[1] It is proper to call attention here to the statement at p. 274 of Frémont's *Report*, and page 388, of his *Memoirs*, where he says: "The Utah is the southern limb of the Great Salt Lake; and thus we had seen that remarkable sheet of water both at its northern and southern extremity." Utah Lake on Frémont's map of the 1843–44 route, is connected by a narrow passage with Salt Lake. Joseph Walker, who knew Salt Lake well, was with Frémont at Utah Lake. See also in Chapter XII., in advance, a reference to this subject.

CHAPTER VIII

TO FORT VANCOUVER

Eating Horse Meat—The Plains of Snake River—Arrive at Fort Hall—First Waggon through to the Columbia—The Three Great Falls of Snake River—Fort Boise and Monsieur Payette—Across the Blue Mountains—Marcus Whitman's Mission—The Methodist Mission—Music from a Sawmill—Fort Vancouver—Plan for a Circuitous Return.

TURNING their backs on the Great Salt Lake, the party, having now only "Digger" roots, yampa, and camas to eat with their coffee, were desirous of speedily arriving at Fort Hall, or of meeting the men who meanwhile had been ordered down from the main supply train with provisions. Practically the same route was followed up Bear River and the Malade which had brought them to the lake, except, of course, the deviations due to lack of knowledge. Carson had killed a number of sea-gulls near the lake and these were a more or less palatable addition to supper at their camp on "Clear Creek." On the 13th of September, the next day, more hot springs were found, and that night they camped on Bear River south of the canyon, called The Gates, by which it comes through the Malade Range into this valley, in latitude 41° 42′ 43″ and longitude 112° 05′ 12″, immediately below a "cut off," the pass by which the Utah Northern Railway afterwards got through to the fertile Cache Valley. Both the valley of Malade River and that of Bear River contain a wide extent of irrigable lands, now under prosperous cultivation, largely by the Mormons who first settled there, and Frémont duly noted the fact.

A gun was fired at intervals to inform the expected relief

party of the camp's position, but they did not arrive. The next evening Frémont, seeing that all hands were famished and dejected, gave permission to butcher a fat young horse, one of those recently purchased from the Snake Indians, and a substantial supper soon put new life into the camp. Neither Lieutenant Frémont nor Preuss, however, could bring themselves to eat of the horse, "feeling as much saddened as if a crime had been committed." It is well known now that horse flesh is wholesome and good eating and no more criminal than eating beef; yet it is exceedingly difficult to overcome the fixed habits of generations. The horse, like the dog, is closer to our hearts than other animals; they seem to be our friends, therefore the sense of cannibalism if they are eaten. I confess that I am not sensitive in this direction and once, many years ago, tried to shoot a wild colt on the plains of Arizona, though we then had no need specially for meat as we had plenty of bacon, but I believed a tender horse steak would be an addition, and wished to see what it was like. However, the band was too wild, and, winding me, sped off like a railway train, one behind the other, a powerful stallion in the lead and the coveted colt bringing up the rear.

The party met some Indians the next day, one of whom had shot an antelope, which was eagerly purchased for some powder and balls. This was on September 15th and that evening they camped early on the left bank of the Roseaux (Malade), having for a time been on the right or west side. During the supper, Tabeau, of the supply train, galloped in with the good news that Fitzpatrick was encamped close by with a fine stock of provisions, even to some butter. Butter never tastes so delicious as when a little of it gets into an explorer's camp after several months without any. It then becomes evident why the European race sets such high value on this article of diet. Early the next morning they were again on the road up the valley, which was parted from later in the day by way of a long ravine leading into

the mountains to a pass over to Snake River; that is to what they called Pannack River, a tributary of the Snake, and one of the routes to Fort Hall, another being by the Portneuf branch, just to the north, on the other side of the Bannock Range. On later maps the name of the river is given Bannock; and this is probably correct—after the Bannock tribe.[1]

In leaving the particular district which so deeply had interested him, Lieutenant Frémont stated: "The bottoms are extensive, water excellent, timber sufficient, the soil good and well adapted to the grains and grasses suited to such an elevated region." He also commended the bunch grass, which everybody was free to commend at a later period from their own profitable experience. No more nutritious grass ever grew. On September 17th they reached the main stem of the Pannack River and camped that night in latitude 42° 44′ 40″, longitude 112° 29′ 52″. The following morning they "came out upon the plains of the Columbia," in other words, of Snake River, and beheld the "Three Buttes" (which he speaks of again as the little mountains) forty-five miles away. These, while not very high, are conspicuous landmarks of the locality. When Thomas J. Farnham passed this way, down the Portneuf, in 1839, he also speaks of coming out on the Snake Plains in sight of the "Trois Butes," which, he says, were fifteen or twenty miles east of Fort Hall, but he does not mean the same buttes that Frémont does. His Trois Butes were the Three Tetons, mountains of imposing grandeur, which he said were 12,000 feet above the sea.[2]

Continuing up the valley of Snake River, on the left or east bank, they crossed the Portneuf River and presently arrived at Fort Hall where Talbot, and the others who

[1] The Bannock Range was named by one of Hayden's survey parties.

[2] The Grand Teton, or highest peak, is 13,747. The Three Tetons, now the Teton Range, were one of the most conspicuous landmarks in the Far West and one of the earliest known. The range is in Wyoming.

had preceded Fitzpatrick, were encamped, not far from the post. The Frémont party camped with them. In the morning daylight was ushered in with a snowstorm, which did not cease, and it made the atmosphere disagreeable as the temperature was not low enough to be dry. Frémont went on horseback to the fort, where he bought from the officer in charge several horses and five oxen, one of the latter being killed to supply the men with much needed food. After one has gone for weeks with reduced amount of food, the system requires for a time more than the custommary daily allowance, and one ox does not go far in a hungry band such as Frémont's men had become. There were snow and ice for several days, which, in view of the fact that it promised to be difficult to obtain sufficient food for so large a party, determined Frémont on sending back a contingent to the States. Indeed, some of the men thought the service more severe than they had bargained for, and when the subject was broached, eleven proved to be quite ready to turn their faces homeward and cross the mountains before winter should set in.

Among these was Basil Lajeunesse, Frémont's favourite, but it was not because this man wanted to go, but because his presence was required at home during the coming winter, that he departed. He joins Frémont once more on his third expedition and never again sees the land of his fathers.

Fort Hall, it will be recalled, was founded by the energetic and redoubtable Wyeth, but the Hudson Bay Company, and other rivals, overwhelmed him and he was compelled to sell out. It was nine miles above the Portneuf, on the left bank of the Snake in a beautiful and fertile bottom. It was built in 1834.[1] One of the most important stations of white men on the Oregon Trail, it was the first of the Hudson Bay posts, coming from the east, and was almost like a frontier custom-house. That is to say, it was more or less of an inquisitorial barrier to any trader or trapper not of the

[1] Farnham says 1832; Chittenden, 1834, which is the correct date.

H. B. Company. The ordinary emigrants for Oregon and California could not well be directly interfered with, so far as passing on was concerned, for that would have been an open and flagrant violation of the mutual agreement between the British and American Governments, but obstacles were placed in the way such as could not easily be detected.

Farnham, describing his arrival in 1839 exclaims, "and before us rose the white battlements of Fort Hall." This fort was built of adobe. Lieutenant Frémont remarks that it was about the same in construction as the other forts he had seen, except that more wood was used. He gives its distance from Westport (Kansas City) by the Oregon Trail as 1323 miles.

At this place the emigrants, up to three years before Frémont's passage—that is, up to 1840—were obliged to leave their waggons, owing to the more rugged character of the topography beyond, over which the trail was forced to lead. The famous Marcus Whitman, so-called Saviour of Oregon, attempted in 1836, when on his way with his bride to the Columbia, to take a waggon farther than Fort Hall, the first trial of this kind, although he had found the greatest difficulty in getting it even that far. One of the axles broke, whereupon he made a sort of cart out of the back wheels, and loaded upon it the fore wheels and axle, and thus continued. He succeeded in reaching with the cart Fort Boise, 300 miles farther west, but there he abandoned it. In 1840, Dr. Robert Newell, who had been in the mountains as early as 1829, took for his pay as guide to some missionaries their two discarded waggons. He later concluded himself to try to take a waggon to the Columbia, and with two others of the same mind, also with waggons, he started. The tall sage-brush, for part of the way, was the greatest obstacle; they reached their destination, without the waggon boxes, which they had thrown away.[1]

[1] George H. Himes in *Kansas Historical Collections*, vol. xii, 1911–12, p. 267.

The Oregon emigration from the United States was making an impression on that region, but Senator Benton contended that

> it was not an act of government leading the people and protecting them, but, like all the other great emigrations and settlements of that race [Anglo-Saxon] on our continent, it was the act of the people, going forward without government aid or countenance, establishing their possession, and compelling the government to follow with its shield and spread it over them. So far as the action of the government was concerned, it operated to endanger our title to the Columbia, to prevent emigration, and to incur the loss of the country.[1]

The heavily beaten Oregon Trail, in this year of 1843, was testimony to the success of Benton and the circle to hasten the settlement of Oregon by American farmers and business men. In his report on this expedition, which was written in Washington in March, 1845, Lieutenant Frémont recommends the establishment of a military post at this place to protect the American emigrants from the Indians. This was before the status of the region had been permanently settled, but it indicates that the circle had little doubt as to the final adjustment.

On the 22d of September (1843) farewells were said to the late companions who were to retrace their steps, but the officer in charge of Fort Hall is not mentioned in this connection, and the Lieutenant led his remaining force off down the valley of Snake River, arriving two days later at noon at the American Falls, the first of the three beautiful cataracts for which the region is noted. The others are called the Salmon (or Fishing) Falls and Shoshone Falls, respectively. The last is by far the finest, and it has been spoken of by competent judges as superior to Niagara. In a certain element of desolate grandeur and picturesqueness, it is, perhaps, more attractive, but, while higher in its

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., p. 469.

Shoshone Falls of Snake River
And the great Lava Plain in which it is set
Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, 1899

vertical drop, it lacks the wide horizontal span of Niagara. But it is like comparing two diamonds of the first water. Shoshone Falls, with its sheer descent of about 200 feet, after preliminary plunges of 125, set in the midst of the broad, forbidding lava plain (see opposite picture), in a black canyon, is a sight worth going a long distance to see, and I was deeply impressed by it. When I was there it was the end of May, and the lava plain was carpeted with flowers, the air was like champagne, and the view of the encircling snow-clad ranges, especially in the very early morning ride to the Falls, was enchanting. The Salmon River, Lost River, Saw Tooth, Goose Creek, Bruno, Pahsimeroy, and other mountains stood white against the blue sky in their several directions, and I thought at the time that nowhere had I beheld a more superb panorama of peaks.

The next day the road led the Frémont party down the valley along the river, which was full of rapids and small falls, the last four miles palisaded. In four more miles the following day they came to a creek which tumbled so rapidly down its rocky bed that it was named Fall Creek. The road along the river bluffs was occasionally very bad, and when they saw a plain waggon trail leading up this Fall Creek—that is, south—Frémont followed it, and discovered that they were on the track of a division of the waggon party with which they had encamped at Elm Grove just after leaving Kansas City. This was the Chiles party, bound for the Sacramento Valley with a fine equipment, including a mill. The outfit had been divided and the mill and much else was proceeding by a more southern route under the competent guidance of Joseph Walker. Meanwhile Chiles himself with ten or twelve men had gone ahead by way of the Malheur and Pitt rivers, with the idea of returning with fresh animals and supplies. The Lieutenant had probably learned these things at Fort Hall, though he does not say so.

As he did not wish to go in a California direction after the travellers, he swung back to the Snake, which he reached

without trouble, and camped that night on the small tributary from the south called Raft River. The whole country was now so rugged that the grass was scarce, especially along the Trail where the emigrants had been, and so also were desirable camping places. In addition, the way was extremely hard on the animals which pulled the carts. There were steep, rocky ascents and descents, the men had to help each cart up some of the short, sharp pulls, and the whole process was fatiguing all round and made progress slow. On September 27th, therefore, at Raft River camp, the company was divided much as before, with Fitzpatrick left in charge of the slow train, while Lieutenant Frémont, with his chosen few, should be free to reconnoitre.

Kit Carson remained with Frémont, and when they camped that night at Swamp Creek he mentioned that some fourteen years before he had seen three or four buffalo here, two of which he killed for his party, which was at the starving point. This, I believe, is the most western limit of the buffalo that can be authenticated by an eye-witness, though there is evidence that they once went as far as the Blue Mountains of Oregon, and even to the foot of the Sierra Nevada. Goose Creek on the 28th gave them some trouble, but altogether the road was an improvement on what had preceded, but one day it was this way, and another that way, for they were travelling across the lava sheet which in some past age had spread so remarkably over a vast area. They camped on Rock Creek. They were now approaching Shoshone Falls, and on September 30th they followed the road, sometimes at a distance from the river, which runs in its canyon, and near evening they turned back to the river, on the trail of some waggons, to camp on the top of the escarpment. Opposite the camp a subterranean river broke from the cliffs and plunged to the bottom. This remarkable stream is not very far below Shoshone Falls, so that he had missed a sight he would greatly have enjoyed. "A melancholy and strange looking country," he remarks, "one of

fracture, and violence and fire." An ox they had driven thus far was killed here, and the bountiful supper its beef afforded removed to some extent, no doubt, the strange and forbidding aspect of the surroundings. When one is terribly hungry, especially with accumulated hunger, a scene may look desolate and forbidding that to a well-fed and rested person would appear merely romantic. The observations placed this camp in latitude 42° 38′ 44″, longitude 114° 25′ 04″.

A climb down to the river on October 1st was made. The rubber boat was taken down, inflated, and the Lieutenant crossed and scaled the opposite cliff the 45 feet necessary to reach the mouth of the subterranean river, where he made his usual lucid notes, given in his report. The total height of the canyon wall was about 200 feet at this place. In the afternoon they proceeded down the river with their train still on the south side and camped at night at the third falls, the Fishing or Salmon Falls, a "series of cataracts with very inclined planes." Several lodges of Shoshone Indians were pitched nearby, "unusually gay savages, fond of loud laughter." All Indians are gay, as a rule, but they maintain a grave demeanor when with strangers. These Indians, and most of the bands below, lived almost entirely on salmon, which at that time mounted the river thus far in prodigious numbers. Some dried salmon was purchased. "We are encamped" says the Lieutenant, "immediately on the river bank, and with the salmon jumping up out of the water, and Indians paddling about in boats made of rushes, or laughing around the fires, the camp to-night has quite a lively appearance." The black precipices for the time had disappeared, and a somewhat more cheerful landscape was immediately around them.

There were many Indians strung along the river as they went on. The outer country became more than ever a contrast with the "mingled beauty and grandeur of the river." Numberless streams and springs fell over the black

cliffs and out of their faces into the river, which was a constant succession of falls and rapids, all surrounded by the vast expanse of the wonderful but desolate lava plain. One place where the descent was about eighteen feet, with much foam and some small islands, was particularly pleasing. The Indians cared less than those in the east for gewgaws, beads, and red paint. They were decked out in any old clothing of the emigrants they could get and valued substantial articles rather than decorative ones. Frémont frequently refers to the surrounding distant mountain ranges, especially to the Salmon River Range, and it is certain that no one with the slightest appreciation of the magnificent in nature could travel across the Snake River Plains without experiencing many pleasurable thrills as his eye ranged the far-off but distinct serrations that stud the entire circumference of the horizon.

About two o'clock on the 3rd of October the Oregon Trail brought them to the ford of Snake River, where they were to go from the left, or south, bank which they had followed, to the right, or north, bank. "The river here is expanded into a little bay in which there are two islands, across which is the road of the ford." This was probably an ancient Indian crossing. Hiring an Indian to point out the way they started into the dashing current, and away went the precious howitzer taking the mules with it and almost drowning them. They were saved only by dexterously cutting the harness. The rubber boat was quickly brought into use and by its aid everything was safely put across, even to the howitzer, which meanwhile had been rescued. They camped where they landed, among some Indian lodges made semicircular, "of willow thatched over with straw, and open to the south." The common name afterwards for these shelters was wickiup. The latitude was 42° 55′ 58″, longitude 115° 04′ 46″, not far evidently from Glenn's Ferry on the Oregon Short Line Railway. On the 5th they found some hot springs with a temperature of

164° F. Hot springs and soda springs are very common in Idaho.

The next day, after about three miles' travel, the volcanic nature of the country with its rough lava began to change and suddenly, as they entered some hills, they found themselves in a granite country. The sage-brush gave way also to other, brighter, plants and green grass. The Lieutenant remarks that he had heard that in Mexico wheat had been grown on sage-brush land. It is now well known that wherever sage-brush flourishes a good crop of wheat can be produced without irrigation. The road was heading for Fort Boise and on the 8th they reached that Hudson Bay post, about a mile, Frémont says, beyond the mouth of the Boise River on the right bank of the Snake. It was "a simple dwelling house" he remarks. Chittenden, in his itinerary of the Oregon Trail, says Fort Boise was eight miles below the mouth of the Boise, so it was evidently not the main establishment that Lieutenant Frémont describes. The party was agreeably received by Mr. Payette, who was in charge and whose garrison consisted of a single Canadian "engagé." When T. J. Farnham was there a few years earlier, Payette, a French Canadian, was "a merry, fat old gentleman of 50," very polite and hospitable. The post had been originally established as a vantage point from which to oust Wyeth from his Fort Hall enterprise, a task which was rapidly and successfully accomplished. Farnham remarks:

> In the exercise of the rights thus granted [by the American Government] the H. B. Company employ their incomparable ingenuity and immense wealth in driving every American trader from the coasts of the North Pacific. . . . The Government of the United States, through want of wisdom or firmness or justice, permitted these important rights of its citizens to be monopolised by foreign capitalists for the last thirty years.[1]

[1] Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies.*

Farnham also states that the fort was eight miles north of the mouth of the Boise, and that it was

> a parallelogram about 100 feet square, surrounded by a stockade of poles about fifteen feet in hight. . . . Across the area north and south runs the principal building. It is constructed of logs, and contains a large dining-room, a sleeping apartment and kitchen. On the north side of the area in front of this is the store; on the south side the dwellings of the servants. . . . This was Fort Boisais in 1839. Mons. Payette was erecting a neat adobe wall around it. . . . Among the curiosities of this establishment were the fore wheels, axletree, and thills of a one-horse waggon.

These were left by the missionaries from the State of Connecticut.

Payette presented the Frémont party with fresh butter, and he was in every way kind and considerate. There was no reason for being otherwise to a scientific party, but the H. B. Company seldom was inhospitable at its posts, and of course much depended on the kind of man in charge. Their Indians might steal or ruin everything an American trapper had, but if he could reach an H. B. post he would be gently resuscitated and sent on his homeward way, well fed, though penniless.

At Fort Boise the Oregon Trail again crossed the Snake, from the north to the south bank, or rather from the east to the west, as the river makes a sudden turn to the north and describes a wide arc in that direction before joining the Columbia. By crossing and bearing north-west, the Trail cut off the long and difficult detour, and arrived at the Columbia some miles below the mouth of the Snake. This cut-off was discovered in December, 1811, by the first white man on record to lead a party through this region, Wilson Price Hunt, who was forced to discontinue his effort to follow Snake River farther north by the extremely rough character of its valley. He had come along the Snake over

Snake River below Lewiston
Photograph by F. S. Dellenbaugh

practically the same route followed by Lieutenant Frémont on the Oregon Trail, except that he had tried to navigate the turbulent river.

Ramsay Crooks was with Hunt on this memorable journey from the east to the west, and he also returned from west to east over the road the next year, 1812, with young Robert Stuart, when they struck more southerly, from about Fort Hall's position, than the Hunt party had come, and thus were the first to go through South Pass. The Oregon Short Line Railway now follows about the same cut across to the Columbia that Hunt did in 1811, and that the Oregon Trail did in the later period.

Lines of progress across a country are determined for any intelligent explorer by the topography, and he heeds the great obstacles to progress, unless he has a special reason for not doing so. Generally the natives had marked out the best highways, and if they could be followed going was easy. When they had few horses, the trails made by moccasined feet were not so deeply marked, yet it is surprising how distinct they were. The morning of October 11th saw the expedition across the Snake and on its way to leave the inhospitable stream behind. The boat was left for Fitzpatrick's benefit. Two starving Irishmen, who had lost their horses and were on the return to Boise, they fed and then proceeded, reaching Malheur River about sunset, a stream fifty feet wide and eighteen inches deep at this time. More hot springs were seen the next day, where the temperature of the water was 193° F. Crossing Birch River they descended to Snake River where it makes a sharp bend—here a "large body of water and a smooth current." At this place they camped in latitude 44° 17′ 36″, longitude 116° 56′ 45″, and altitude 1880 feet above the sea.

This camp was the last on the Snake, and the Lieutenant records some impressions as he contemplated the region to the southward, speaking of the "California Range," the name then used for the Sierra Nevada, forming the

eastern limit of the fertile and timbered lands along the desert and mountainous region included within the Great Basin—a term which I apply to the intermediate region between the Rocky Mountains and the next range, containing many lakes, with their own system of rivers and creeks (of which the Great Salt Lake is the principal), and which have no connection with the ocean or the great rivers which flow into it. This Great Basin is yet to be adequately explored.

This, I believe, is the first time the term Great Basin is used in print and, so far as I know, Frémont was the originator of it. Captain Wilkes on his map of 1841 calls it "Great Sandy Plain," and Bonneville's map of an earlier date does not give it a name.[1] Of course it is not one continuous basin, for, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, it is much broken up by short mountain ranges, but the entire area possesses a certain homogeneity of configuration that fully warrants the special term Great Basin as applied to the whole feature.

The expedition was now in an exceedingly mountainous country. The valley of Burnt River looked to the Lieutenant like a hole among the hills. The road was rough and for waggons dangerous, sometimes difficult even for a riding horse. It was up and down and down and up, over the rocks, crossing and recrossing deep waters, which made progress slow. All things have their compensations, and this ruggedness was beautiful; furthermore, the hills were covered with rich bunch grass, enabling the animals to get their fill of nourishing food. It was all a sharp contrast to the black barrenness of the Snake River Plains. Several Cayuse Indians (Waiilatpuan) had joined the caravan and continued with them for two or three days.

[1] Wilkes's maps while dated "1841" cannot be relied on implicitly as not showing anything after that year. On the one of the Oregon Country are the words "Frémont's South Pass." Frémont, as we know, was not at South Pass till the Summer of *1842* and did not make his report till March 1843. The Wilkes report is dated 1845 and it would seem the maps ought to have the same date.

On the afternoon of the 17th they obtained a view of the fine valley of the Grande Ronde—a great circle. Beyond were the Blue Mountains, a splendid range, which the party had observed for a day or two. I know of no more beautiful range than this, especially as one approaches it in the afternoon when it looms abrupt, blue, and mighty against the western sky. I find in my diary an entry that we "caught glimpses of the Blue Mountains ahead. At one point their snowy summits were massed against the west, misty and grand with a fine cloud effect, the golden glow of sunset breaking through at one place softly, not violently, and forming an exquisite picture." The altitude of the range is 8650 feet above sea. The entrance into the valley which Lieutenant Frémont had followed was that marked by some preceding emigrant waggons, and it was abrupt and rough. When he found they had headed for a similar exit, he soon abandoned this road and struck out for himself, on an Indian trail which Payette had described to him.

They had an even harder time than they probably would have found on the waggon trail, and at their camp of October 19th, when they had passed out of the Grande Ronde Valley altogether and were scaling the Blue Mountains, they had a hard task getting water from the bottom of a deep canyon in the darkness. Their altitude above the sea was here 3830 feet, latitude 45° 38′ 07″, longitude 117° 28′ 34″. Several days of this sort of travelling brought them gradually to the western "verge of the Blue Mountains, long spurs of which, very precipitous on either side, extended down to the valley, the waters of the mountain roaring between them." The barometer was broken, after which the altitudes were calculated from the boiling point of water, to-day considered the most exact method.

Winding around the heads of these ravines and gradually descending they camped for the night of October 22nd in a large meadow, "in view of the great prairie (Nez Percé) below." They crossed the head of the Umatilla River and

got down on the Walla Walla. Preuss who had walked ahead of the caravan failed to come in to camp at dark, but the next day they discovered him farther down on the Walla Walla River. He had gone too far ahead to make rejoining the outfit easy so he stayed where he was. A sight of Mount Hood, 180 miles away, was obtained as they emerged from the timber of the Blue Mountain slopes. The nights and mornings were quite cool now but the days were still pleasantly warm. At sunset on the 23rd of October the thermometer (F.) stood at 48°. Latitude was 45° 53′ 35″, longitude 118° 00′ 39″.

Proceeding down the Walla Walla they soon arrived at the Presbyterian missionary establishment, consisting of one adobe house, of Dr. Marcus Whitman, who had become so imbued with the necessity of missionary work in this country on his first visit in 1832 that he returned East when only part way through the wilderness and prepared for extensive labours in this field, giving up the practice of the medical profession except as it fell to his lot in missionary work. Small-pox broke out among the Indians at a later time, and although Whitman had been all kindness to them, they ascribed their misfortune to him and the other missionaries, especially as the Indians died and the whites did not, and about three years after Lieutenant Frémont's visit, and eleven after the doctor began his whole-hearted work for them, the Cayuses murdered Doctor and Mrs. Whitman and many others who were at the station. The superstition of the Indians had been excited, probably by the shamans, and when this occurs they halt at nothing. We must not condemn all Indians because some are unjust and cruel. White men not infrequently are murderers.[1]

Dr. Whitman was absent at the time Frémont arrived.

[1] We have only to remember the appalling revelations in the New York Police Department in 1912–13, to discover to what depths of depravity white men can fall in the business of murder, and no Indians were ever so brutal at heart as the New York tough and gangster.

Mount Hood (Altitude 11,225 Feet) and a Salmon Fish Wheel

From the Dalles, Oregon. Mount Hood is an "extinct" volcano

There were Nez Percé Indians encamped there and a large family of healthy emigrants. After securing some potatoes, no flour being available as the mill had burned down, the caravan continued on its way, and camped a few miles below. On the 26th of October in the morning they reached Nez Percé Fort, a Hudson Bay post at the junction of the Walla Walla and the Columbia, not far from where Wallula now stands, and obtained their first view of the great Columbia, which Frémont notes was 1200 yards wide and presenting the appearance of a fine navigable stream. He had made numerous notes as they came through the Blue Mountains, and he even walked long distances with a tape line in his hand in order to measure the trees and form an accurate opinion as to their diameters, height, etc.

The commander of the fort, a Mr. McKinlay, received them with "great civility and also treated the heads of the emigrant families the same way, inviting them all to dinner. One of the emigrants was named Applegate, under whose direction a number of boats were building, and nearly completed, in which the people intended to continue their journey down the waters of the Columbia, instead of travelling by land. Soon after the Frémont Expedition had started they were passed by this party gliding easily down the smooth, swift river. Frémont wound up the month of October plodding along down the south bank of the Columbia, with occasional sights of Mount Hood's white cone and of the equally beautiful cone of Mount St. Helens, Mount Hood being in view most of the time. It is a majestic sight. Its isolation tends to enchance its grandeur as there is nothing near to detract from it. A mountain standing like this acquires almost a personality. The last camp in October was in latitude 45° 44′ 23″, longitude 119° 45′ 09″.

November, 1843, was begun by a clear sharp morning, and a brilliant view of Mount Hood, as the expedition proceeded down the great river, now 1690 feet broad with dark bluffs of picturesque rocks. On the 2nd they were

obliged to make a detour on account of the steepness of the bluffs, crossed John Day's River, and camped in a grassy hollow without water. John Day's River was so called after an unfortunate member of Wilson Price Hunt's 1811 party. The next day they struggled across Fall River (Deschutes River), at the regular ford—no easy passage, for the river was high. The precious howitzer was sometimes several feet under water, and it might be surmised that by this time the Lieutenant had become aware of its uselessness and would have allowed it to remain submerged, but, on the contrary, he appeared still to believe it so valuable that the thought arises that perhaps, after all, it was not intended solely to frighten Indians. Whatever the reason it was dragged along tenaciously until it became an impossibility to move it any farther.

Indians were met with frequently but there was no hostility. Frémont writes:

> In comparison with the Indians of the Rocky Mountains and the great eastern plain, these are disagreeably dirty in their habits. Their huts were crowded with half-naked women and children, and the atmosphere within anything but pleasant to persons who had just been riding in the fresh morning air.

From a hill on the 4th they overlooked the valley of the Columbia for many miles, and a chief pointed out several large houses in the distance as the Methodist Missionary establishment, called by the Indians "Lee House." This was the one founded by Lee and Perkins in 1838. A few miles beyond this point they came to the Dalles, where the entire river is compressed to small dimensions and ploughs madly through a narrow gash in the basalt. Frémont measured the passage and found the narrowest part fifty yards, with walls of about twenty-five feet in height, forming a trough—"whence the name, probably applied by a Canadian voyageur."

Applegate and his other boatmen tried to run this place,

not a difficult matter at the low stage of water then prevailing, but one man was inexperienced. The boat was capsized; two of Applegate's children and the man were drowned. The caravan proceeded below the Dalles three or four miles, and that night, November 4th, camped at the Methodist mission they had seen from the eminence earlier in the day. Two good dwelling-houses, a schoolhouse, stables, barn, and gardens with large cleared fields, on which were the huts of the Indians, "gave the valley the cheerful and busy air of civilisation, and had in our eyes an appearance of abundant and enviable comfort. . . and the hospitable and kind reception with which we were welcomed among our country people at the mission aided the momentary illusion of home." The place was under the direction of Mr. Perkins.[1]

Here a large canoe was obtained from the Indians, for the Lieutenant found it desirable to complete his journey to Fort Vancouver by water. Word was sent back to Fitzpatrick to abandon the carts at Whitman's and come on with packs, to meet the commander at the Dalles, whence he would start on the return trip. Carson was left at the Dalles to superintend the making of pack-saddles, for there would be no chance for anything on wheels, except the cannon, after this. A pack-saddle is not hard to make. Two pine boards, about six inches wide and eighteen inches long, are rounded on the ends and on the edges of the side which is to be next the animal's back. To these are screwed, nailed, or tied two crosstrees, each like a letter X with the upper arms very short, made by notching together two pieces of oak, or other strong wood, about one and a quarter inch square, and a foot long. These are placed a few inches back from the ends of the boards. More or less adjustment and shaping of the boards are done according to the idea of the maker. Straps for the cinche, and for the crupper and breeching, if these are to be attached, and for

[1] For details on this establishment, see Farnham's *Travels in the Great Western Prairies*, chapter viii.

a breast strap, considered superfluous by some, are fastened on securely.

A blanket is placed on the animal's back, the saddle on this, and the cinche is drawn as tightly as possible by placing one foot against the animal's side and hauling on the leather strap, which has been passed through the iron rings, with all one's strength. This, apparently, almost cuts the mule or horse in two equal parts, but it is best for him—the desirable thing in slinging a pack is to have it hold its place. A loose pack is no kindness to its carrier. On the saddle-buck are slung, by means of small ropes, two sacks of goods which balance, or two prepared "alforgas," a kind of square bag with loops which fit over the crosses of the saddle-buck. Next are piled carefully on in balance the desired number of articles, to the extent all together of say 150 to 200 pounds,—blankets, tent, small loose articles of little weight,—and over all the canvas pack cover, upon which the long, strong rope is crossed and tucked under very scientifically by the two packers, one on each side, and drawn very tight to make the "hitch." The most difficult to learn, and the best for packing, is the "Diamond Hitch," too complicated to describe easily. The name comes from the fact that the rope forms a diamond on top of the pack. I have slung it hundreds of times, in heat and in cold, in snow and in rain, and its character is deeply impressed on my mind. Mules occasionally dislike the operation so greatly that they must be blindfolded—with a blindfold animal one can do anything. They are quiet as long as the blind remains in place, but should it drop off prematurely during the operation the packers will be found distributed some yards distant from the scene.

The journey from the Dalles down to Fort Vancouver was an agreeable change for those who made it: Lieutenant Frémont, Preuss, Bernier, and Jacob Dodson. The canoe was skilfully managed by three Indians, and some of the distance was made at night to avoid the high winds which

Astoria, Oregon, in 1841
From vol. v of the Report of Captain Charles Wilkes, U. S. N.

blow in daytime. As Lieutenant Frémont had now connected his operations with those of Captain Wilkes of the United States Navy, there was little need to examine this country closely. Where the Columbia breaks through the Coast Mountains there is a succession of severe rapids called Cascades, from which the range takes its name. As before pointed out, it is a continuation of both the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range which together merge into this one. At the Cascades a successful portage was made with the assistance of other Indians engaged at the spot. The rough water continued for about two miles, some of it being navigable for the canoe, and then there was a smooth river again.

The noise of a sawmill is not usually considered an agreeable sound, but when the boat in the night was passing one which was in operation, they floated quietly in order to enjoy its music. A sawmill means homes, food, comfort to the explorer; it is usually the foundation of these requisites in a new country, and its hum may be classed with the mellow tone of the cowbell, the crowing of chanticleer, and the scream of the steam whistle as a sort of frontier symphony. Before midnight of the day after leaving the Dalles the boat party camped about a mile above Fort Vancouver, and the next morning Lieutenant Frémont immediately called on Doctor McLoughlin, officer in charge, and was cordially received by that distinguished gentleman, director-in-chief of all the Hudson Bay Company's posts west of the Rocky Mountains. It was this kind-hearted man who gradually found himself opposed to the attitude of the H. B. Co. toward American settlers, whose cause he valiantly furthered, till he met trouble with the Company and finally himself became a citizen of the United States. Frémont had no difficulty in purchasing on government orders all the supplies he needed, and McLoughlin placed at his disposal boats and crews for their transportation to the Dalles.

There were many American emigrants at the fort, others

had gone on, and still others were daily arriving. All of these received courtesy and hospitality from Doctor McLoughlin, who was a great man, one of large views and wide sympathies. He did not approve of trading rum and alcohol to the natives and all he could get hold of he stored away out of reach of every one. Captain Wilkes tells of his actually purchasing a large amount of rum brought in by a vessel, merely to put it away in safe storage, before it could be otherwise disposed of.

The establishment was a most complete one, comprising an apothecary shop, bakery, blacksmith's and cooper's shops, offices for buying and selling, counting-rooms, and retail shops where everything could be bought including groceries. All the other posts in this department were supplied through Vancouver.

The buildings covered about four acres (250 x 150 yards, says Farnham) enclosed by a stockade twenty-five feet high, with a couple of entrance gates. There were no bastions, galleries, or loopholes as in most other forts, and the only warlike weapons which Captain Wilkes could get any knowledge of were two old cannon on sea carriages. In the centre of the enclosure stood the Roman Catholic Chapel, Dr. McLoughlin and many of the other Canadians holding to that faith, but this did not interfere with the extension of all kinds of aid to the missionaries of other creeds who passed this way. There were also farms, gardens, and a dairy attached which produced grain, vegetables, fruits, butter, and other staples of the kind. A grist-mill, and the sawmill, turning out three thousand feet of lumber per day, which had made music for the Frémont party in the stilly night as they came down the river, were also part of the plant. All the axes and hatchets used by their trappers were manufactured here.[1]

[1] Condensed from the Report of Captain Wilkes, vol. v., p. 327 *et seq.* See Farnham's *Travels in the Great Western Prairies* for a detailed description. The fort had a stronger armament later.

In two days Frémont had made all arrangements and was ready to return to the Dalles. He resisted the temptation, which was a strong one, to continue down the river till he could see the Pacific. "The object of my instructions," he remarks, "had been entirely fulfilled in having connected our reconnaissance with the surveys of Captain Wilkes." He could now, very properly, have taken the Oregon Trail for home with the prospect of easy going as he understood every foot of the way, but this was not his desire, and it is probable that the feasibility of performing the task he was about to enter upon had been talked over with Senator Benton and other advisers before he started. Information was desired of that great interior wilderness. His intention was to go back by way of Klamath Lake and "a great circuit to the south and south-east," by which he expected to explore the "Great Basin between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada." The Buenaventura River, already eliminated from the maps of Gallatin, Bonneville, and Wilkes, was to be another point on this route, and finally they were to strike for Bent's Fort on the Arkansas about seventy miles below the present city of Pueblo, Colorado. Doctor McLoughlin believed in the existence of the Buenaventura, "and made out a conjectural manuscript map to show its place and course," to Frémont, says Benton.[1] A reproduction of Bonneville's map is given at page 24.

Lieutenant Frémont was not only exact and scientific in his undertakings, but he never chose the easy path. In exploration, however, it is not desirable to plunge in without a complete preliminary examination of all existing data on the subject, and especially of that obtained by others on the spot. The Lieutenant does not seem to know about the remarkable journey of Jedediah Smith across the Great Basin in 1827, nor much of Joseph Walker's in 1833 (he is joined by Walker on the return from California in 1844), nor of Bonneville's map, nor Gallatin's. The map made by

[1] *Thirty Years' View*, vol. ii., p. 580.

Captain Wilkes, facing page 44, this volume, is dated 1841. Frémont may have had a copy of it with him, though it was not published to the world till after Frémont's return from this second expedition. He ought to have had Gallatin's, which was published in 1836. Perhaps he thought them incorrect, or, at least, incomplete. It is plain to see that there were some hard days in store for the resolute and enterprising Lieutenant before he should arrive at Bent's Fort.

CHAPTER IX

THE SEARCH FOR THE RIO BUENAVENTURA

A Myth that was not a Myth—Volcanoes of the Columbia—The Precious Howitzer—Some Cold Weather—Klamath Marsh Taken for the Lake—Where is Mary's Lake?—Summer Lake and Lake Abert—Deep Snows, Sandy Valleys, Black Fog—A Topographical Surprise—The Lake of the Pyramid—Feasting on Salmon-trout—No Rio Buenaventura—Westward Ho!

UP to Fort Vancouver, just opposite the present city of Portland, the travels of Lieutenant Frémont west of the Rocky Mountains had been in the disputed territory of Oregon, a district then generally defined as beginning at the transcontinental divide, and embracing the country north of 42° even to 54°, 40′, except a brief traverse of the north-eastern corner of Mexico, and his visit to Great Salt Lake, also in Mexican territory. Now he was about to make an extensive tour through the middle of the region at that time called Alta or Upper California: the area between the Colorado River, the 42d parallel, and the Pacific. From Klamath Lake he intended to go south-east to a reported lake called Mary's at some days' journey in the Great Basin; and thence still on south-east to the reputed Buenaventura River, which has had a place on so many maps, and countenanced the belief of the existence of a great river flowing from the Rocky Mountains to the Bay of San Francisco.

A glance at Bonneville's map, facing page 24, and at the map of Captain Wilkes, facing page 44, will show no Buenaventura River. As already stated this myth had been

exploded by the travels of Jedediah Smith and Joseph Walker; but myths are slow to die, and many of the frontiersmen did not know about Smith's journey not only across the Great Basin but along the coast to Vancouver. Frémont strongly believed that this Buenaventura might exist, evidently Carson and Fitzpatrick did not oppose his idea; perhaps they themselves believed in it, as neither knew the region where it was supposed to flow. Walker knew it best but Frémont did not learn from him till on the return journey in May, "that, from the Great Salt Lake west, there was a succession of lakes and rivers which have no outlet to the sea nor any connection with the Columbia, or with the Colorado."[1] Consequently there was the old Buenaventura myth, ever youthful like a beautiful vision, leading them on; a vision of a broad river with grassy bottoms and great groves of cool cottonwoods, where they planned to winter, on "the banks of the Buenaventura, where in the softer climate of a more southern latitude, our horses might find grass to sustain them, and ourselves be sheltered from the rigours of winter and from the inhospitable desert."[2] He relied on Mary's Lake and the Buenaventura to recruit the animals and repose the party. They are now setting out to discover these unknown charms, and perhaps from that point of vantage the Lieutenant meant to reconnoitre the whole California situation! How different was the reality from this enticing dream of soft breezes and languorous repose!

The boat party left Fort Vancouver for the Dalles on November 10th, 1843, and they found going up the Columbia quite another story from going down. The 11th and all the following days till the afternoon of the 18th were occupied with laboriously working the boats up-stream; towing, paddling, portaging. Views of the several fine peaks were frequently obtained; of what he calls "Mt. Regnier" (Rainier, now known as Tacoma also) (14,363 feet), Mt. St.

[1] *Report*, p. 275.

[2] *Report*, p. 205.

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Mount St. Helens, Washington

From the Columbia River. Altitude 10,000 feet. This is an "extinct" volcano

Helens (10,000 feet), and Mt. Hood (11,225 feet). St. Helens had been mildly active the year before and from one of the missionaries Frémont got some of the ashes thrown out at that time. He also states that Rainier had been active.

Arriving at the Dalles, everything was found in good order under Carson's efficient care, and William Gilpin, a guest of the expedition, had arrived in advance of Fitzpatrick. He intended to examine the settlements and went down the Columbia the next day in the returning boats. Frémont seems to have discovered little in this remarkable man to interest him, though the fact that he travelled with the Fitzpatrick supply train may account for the lack of mention in the report. The new party for Klamath Lake and the Buenaventura paradise was twenty-five in number, several being under twenty-one years of age; but young men are an advantage, if they have sense. All were full of confidence notwithstanding they were about to enter an almost unknown region, and the Lieutenant testifies that they were cheerful, ready, and obedient from first to last, a contrast to the somewhat hysterical band Frémont had with him on his first expedition to the Wind River Mountains.

A supply of provisions for three months had been secured at Vancouver, consisting principally of flour, peas, and tallow. The tallow was for cooking and I can vouch for the palatability of clean white tallow used in place of bacon-fat in camp, for I have tried it myself. Butter, lard, or oil are too rare to be mentioned. Besides these supplies, a number of cattle were driven along to be butchered as needed. There were 104 horses and mules—seventy-nine therefore available for packing. On the 21st Fitzpatrick and Talbot and the rest of the supply outfit came in. One man was discharged, and in his place a young Chinook, a protégé of Superintendent Perkins, was engaged to go part of the way. Two Indians were induced by Mr. Perkins to accompany the party for a time as guides, one of whom bore scars of an

encounter with the natives of the Klamath region on a former trip.

On November 25th all hands were early astir under an array of intensely brilliant stars gleaming through the frosty air, which was crisp with its temperature of 26° F. at sunrise. The stars never shine at any other time, it appears to me, with quite such intensity as very early on one of these winter mornings in the Far West, especially at a high altitude. It seems almost as if one could reach up and pluck them from the enveloping ebony. The sky at great elevations is not blue, it is black—even at midday. This was the day for beginning the far journey into the mysteries of the south—into the land of the seductive Buenaventura. The instrument waggon was discarded as henceforth useless and presented to the Mission, but the howitzer, though on wheels, was still near to the Lieutenant's heart and it was taken along.

About noon the long cavalcade of pack-animals and horsemen, the cannon being the only wheeled transportation, started on its way amid flurries of snow, signals, as it were, of what the future held in store for them instead of the mythical meadows and the *dolce far niente* of lapping waters, to which they looked forward. Mr. Perkins rode with them several miles, a last exhibition of his attention and kindness, then he turned back and the expedition, the final thread of intercourse severed, plodded on into the new realm of which the Lieutenant dreamed with scientific joy. Here was the promised land for him, a land full of geographical, botanical, geological problems for him to solve; and a land that lay not so far from the bay of San Francisco. He was happy, no matter what the hardships might be. Climbing out of the valley of the river they soon came to snow lying on the ground in patches, but the grass was abundant and green. Camp was pitched on a little branch of the creek they had followed up, which Frémont calls Tinanens Creek (Eight-mile Creek), with good grass and

fine timber. Two "bad looking" Indians, among a number who had elected to accompany the party for a time, were caught stealing and were tied and laid before the fire with a guard. Evidently this treatment was effective for the scamps are not mentioned again.

The night was freezing cold; at sunrise the next morning the temperature was only 20° F. This was the first real cold weather experienced and in camp one always feels the first sharp mornings even more than much colder weather after winter has fairly set in. Continuing on up the Tinanens Creek they followed a right-hand branch of the trail and came out on the divide between this stream and "Fall River." A fine view of St. Helens and Rainier was presented from these heights, and they also saw below them Taih (Tygh) Prairie to which they descended and camped on the stream (White River) in it, after dark guided by the light of fires which "some naked Indians belonging to a village on the opposite side" built for the purpose. They had travelled almost due south from the Methodist Mission and were to continue in about that direction along the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range as far as Klamath Marsh, parallel 43°.

Frémont observes that this country is far more interesting than the route along the Snake and the Columbia, the splendid Cascade Range (which divides Oregon into two distinct climates) being in view constantly, on their right. They sighted Mt. Jefferson (10,200 feet) and towards evening arrived at another tributary to the Deschutes River (Nena Creek) and went into camp in latitude 45° 06′ 45″, longitude 121° 02′ 43″, not far from the present town of Wapinitia, Oregon. The thermometer during the observations stood at 9° F. In the morning it had been down to 2.5° F., a proof that the real winter had come. Barring the canyons in which streams flowed across their path, and which caused them considerable hard work, the way was not difficult. Sometimes the gun-carriage had to be unlimbered, and maneuvred down and up the declivities by hand.

Making his customary notes on everything he saw, botany, geology, topography, accessibility, etc., Frémont went on south without particular incident for several days. On December 1st one of the mules got his pack wet at a ford which turned the sugar it contained to syrup. Near their camp that night was a family of Nez Percés (Shahaptian) who had so handsome a horse Frémont tried to trade for it a cow. Much as they wanted the cow they loved the horse too well to let him go. Early the next morning the mountain peaks "presented a beautiful appearance, the snow being entirely covered with a hue of rosy gold." This is one of the most enchanting effects on high mountains, and when the traveller beholds a scene of this kind in its full perfection it is something to remember to the final hour. I recall an evening when the whole Stikine Range in Alaska was effulgent with this rosy glow, the distance and shadows at the same time being an ethereal blue. Every member of our party gazed on the scene with rapture and turned away only when the range became sombre, as it sank into darkness. Frémont was artistically sensitive to his surroundings and notes effects which many explorers do not see.

The streams everywhere were full of falls, rapids, and foaming cascades. There was much fine timber, "larches" in one place 140 feet high and over three feet in diameter. On December 5th they had the "rare sight of a lunar rainbow." Most people never see one; I have seen no more than three, but one of these in the mountains of Arizona was almost a perfect specimen, though our enjoyment of it was somewhat marred by a mule distributing the contents of its pack over several moonlit acres. On December 7th the last camp on Fall River was made in latitude 43° 30′ 36″, longitude 121° 33′ 50″, only a trifle west of south of the Dalles. The morning after the last branch of Deschutes River (Fall River) was left behind and they went on following the same Indian trail they evidently had been on the whole time, leading a "little east of south, constantly

Nez Percé Teepees

These are built in the original style of plains teepee of buffalo skins
Photograph by W. H. Jackson, Hayden Survey

through pine forests." The soil became poor and grass sometimes was scarce.

On December 10th near noon a grassy meadow was reached which the guides said was an arm of Klamath Lake (Frémont writes it Tlamath, which is probably the way it should be, but now it is written Klamath), and very soon they saw "an extensive meadow or lake of grass, surrounded by timbered mountains." This, he says, was Klamath Lake, but he was wrong for it was only what is now known as Klamath Marsh. Klamath Lake is about thirty miles farther south. Frémont's route at Klamath Marsh turns abruptly east to another lake to which he gave the name of Summer. He did not see Klamath Lake. The animals enjoyed the abundance of grass here and they certainly needed all the fortifying possible for their coming experiences.

It was necessary now to be continually on the alert regarding the Indians of this region, who, the Lieutenant says, had a reputation for hostility. A smoke was observed rising from the middle of the marsh, and from its farther side. Thinking to impress these far-off persons, a village of the natives the guides said, with the mighty power of the approaching caravan, the Lieutenant ordered the howitzer, for the first time after dragging it all these weary leagues, to be charged and fired. The shell sped forth and at the proper interval burst, to the great consternation and delight of the redskin guides at the rear end of the formidable piece. Of course the smokes immediately vanished, and those who had built them were fairly warned to look out for the enemy. The extinguishment of the smokes was the first step in preparation.

The marsh, or as Frémont took it to be, the lake, he describes as a shallow basin which is at times for a brief period covered with water, leaving, when it departs, a sort of grassy meadow through which the Tlamath River as he calls it, now the Williamson, winds its way to Klamath Lake

below which the stream is named Klamath, and flows westwardly to the waters of the Pacific. The next day, no Indians having appeared, though we may be certain that while unseen they were not unseeing, Frémont determined to go to their village, one of the guides previously having been there. As this place was surrounded by the marsh which had water here and there, with sheets of ice amidst the grass rendering it impossible for the horses to keep on their feet, the guide led the way along the edge, in the forest, before turning off toward the village. After a time it could be discerned in the form of a few "large huts," on top of which were collected the Indians. When within half a mile two were seen approaching the strange visitors.

At the request of the guides the cavalcade spread out into a long line riding abreast and certainly must have made an imposing appearance. The guides galloped ahead to meet the two persons and soon Frémont also met them, surprised to find the chief and his wife, the chief "a very prepossessing Indian, with very handsome features, and a singularly soft and agreeable voice." These people I may say have never been warlike and their only desire now with the approaching strangers, whom they had probably before well studied, was peace.

Their houses were near the bank of the river, "large round huts perhaps twenty feet in diameter, with rounded tops, on which was the door by which they descended into the interior." Originally a notched log was used as a ladder for descent in Amerindian houses of this type. The usual construction is a framework of posts and beams, covered first with poles or branches, then brush of some sort, grass and earth. The chief weapon of the natives at this time was the bow-and-arrow, and a very effective arm it was at any range under one hundred yards. Kit Carson once remarked on this efficiency, especially in the darkness of night. The muscles of the Indians became strongly developed, enabling them to pull the bow with a great force

that was transmitted to the arrow. Various heads were used. Arrows for rabbits, birds, and other small game were not tipped at all, the hard wood being merely brought to a point and perhaps extra hardened in the fire (hard wood very slightly charred becomes much harder). Stone and strap iron were the usual material for arrow-heads, the iron superseding the stone as intercourse with whites increased. Many years ago I obtained stone-headed arrows from Pai Utes, but I did not see them make the heads, though they showed me how it was done.[1]

The Klamaths were subsisting at the moment of Frémont's visit on a small fish, "great quantities of which, smoked and dried, were hanging on strings about the lodge. . . . Their shoes were made of straw or grass, . . . and the women wore on their heads a closely woven basket, which made a very good cap." This kind of a cap was in wide use among the tribes of California and the entire Pacific Slope. Mats four feet square were purchased from the Klamaths to "lay on the snow under our blankets and to use for table-cloths." He means, as cloths for the ground on which to spread the dishes, for it is not likely that there was a table in the outfit. "Numbers of singular looking dogs, resembling wolves, were sitting on the tops of the huts; and of these we purchased a young one, which, after its birthplace, was named Tlamath." He meets a singular fate later.

Frémont notes that the language spoken by the Klamaths is different from the Shoshone and the Columbia River tribes. The Klamath is of the Lutuamian stock. They declared they were at war with the Modocs, who ranged south-west Oregon, yet the Modocs were their closest of kin, being precisely of the same stock, and speaking almost

[1] The selected flake of flint is laid on the left palm on a piece of buck-skin. With a piece of the small leg bone of a deer ground to a dull point, used in the right hand, flakes of the flint are chipped off by down pressure on the edge. It is not difficult, though skill varies in this as in any other operation.

exactly the same tongue. The Modocs were of more resolute spirit, and made their last stand against the whites in the noted Modoc War (1872–73). The locality of the Klamath Marsh Frémont pronounced picturesque and beautiful, "and under the hand of cultivation might become a little paradise." The latitude of this camp was 42° 56′ 51″. Crater Lake, now a National Park, is about twenty-five miles west of Klamath Marsh but it was undiscovered at this time.

The party turning eastward here were about to enter the, in this region, vague and variable bounds of the Great Basin; vague and variable because in some places it is the amount of annual precipitation which determines the boundary line. In very wet weather some of the lakes drain into California rivers; in dry they are a part of the many sub-drainage areas of the Great Basin. Frémont speaks in his narrative of "the best maps in his possession" showing the Mary's Lake and the Buenaventura River forming "a connected water line from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean," and he was eager to cross quickly and safely the intervening desert to the banks of the Buenaventura with its alluring meadows and balmy air. It would be interesting to know what maps these were that he had which gave these remarkable features, and why it was he had not examined the maps of Gallatin, Bonneville, and Wilkes with special reference to this will-o'-the-wisp he was following.

Frémont, it seems was somewhat imaginative, and the idea of the Buenaventura apparently appealed to this phase of his mind. I cannot help thinking, too, that the belief in the existence of this lovely river valley south of the desert basins and close to the "California Mountains" had given rise to speculation on the feasibility of planting some kind of a military post there, in the event of a rupture with Mexico. After the discovery that it was all a myth any such notion certainly could not be mentioned. This is, of course, only surmise on my part and has no foundation in any word or

act of Frémont, except possibly the hauling for so long of the useless howitzer. With its shells, this would have been desirable in a fort, and it must not be forgotten that the relations between Mexico and the United States in this year 1843 were at extreme tension, the imminent annexation of Texas with its boundary claim being deemed by Mexico an unfriendly act provocative of war.

The guides who had been their leaders up to this point now returned and no others from the Klamath tribe would consent to go. On the 12th December, the day after the visit to the Klamath village, the camp was filled with others of the tribe from the south-eastern shore of the "lake." Frémont feared treachery and every man was on his guard. "I was not unmindful," remarks the Lieutenant, "of the disasters which Smith, and other travellers, had met with in this country, and therefore was equally vigilant in guarding against treachery and violence." According to this statement he *did* know about the journeys of Jedediah Smith; at least he knew about the one Smith made in 1828 up through northern California to Fort Vancouver, and therefore he should have known of the famous first traverse of the Great Basin by him in 1827. It was not these Klamath Indians who brought disaster to Smith, but those of the Umpqua River, where he was at the time, and they were of the Umpqua (Athapascan) tribe. On the 14th of July, 1828, while Smith was out searching for a trail, his camp was attacked and fifteen of his men killed. Only three escaped and they flew from the scene, so Smith travelled alone to Fort Vancouver. Doctor McLoughlin immediately sent out a party which punished the Indians and secured most of the belongings of Smith which they had appropriated. Among this property was $20,000 worth of furs which McLoughlin bought at their full value, and in other ways he aided and befriended Smith, the pious trapper, in accordance with his own large and generous nature. Smith thereafter refused to trap or do any interfering business in the region

west of the Rocky Mountains which the Hudson Bay Company had pre-empted.

Leaving the Klamath Marsh camp on the 12th the expedition crossed the end of the meadows and headed eastward towards a lake, which the Indians told of, about in the direction Frémont had planned to go. There were ponds of ice and the pack animals fell frequently, necessitating assistance to put them on their feet again. A pack animal can rise with a pack if the footing is good, but not when it is slippery. Snow fell at intervals in large flakes and the sky was heavy and dark. Snow of this kind makes travelling specially difficult for the reason that it is hard to see the way. They camped finally in a cove, still near the eastern shore of the "lake," with timber and good grass. The next day the snow was from four to twelve inches deep. Going was hard, especially for the mules attached to the valuable howitzer. The party was overtaken by the Klamath chief and several of his men, come to act as guides for a day or two. They advised camping on a stream of some size, in latitude 42° 51′ 26″, longitude, 121° 20′ 42," having made twelve miles. This was "tributary to the lake and headwater of the Klamath River." The nights and mornings were now very cold, having been at zero on this particular morning. With plenty of good firewood, cold weather is no drawback to camping as one can be perfectly comfortable, especially if he has a tent. Without a tent the snow is apt to melt around the edges of the blankets. In those days the sleeping-bag had not been invented.

On the 14th of December the snow was very deep and still it was steadily falling as the caravan travelled on for seven hours. The Indians suffered badly from cold and that evening declined to proceed any farther. The party had been going over other marshes and now were at a new stream (Sycan River, Beaver Creek branch) which came from the east and just below turned south, the Indians showing, by making a map on the ground in the way Indians

do, how this ran on in a southerly direction, receiving many affluents and at last becoming a great river. From this Frémont deduced the conclusion that he must be on the headwaters of the Sacramento River, and he refers to subsequent information confirming this opinion. Nevertheless he was mistaken. He was still in the drainage area of Klamath River; he must have misunderstood the map of the Indians, for it is not likely that they made the error.

The guides were given presents in the morning and went home rejoicing, while Frémont took a course north, sixty degrees east, as indicated by his Klamath friends. He crossed what he called the Sacramento, and entered a grassy plain. Beyond this open valley they had timber again with very deep snow, making the progress slow and difficult up a mountain. Plodding on for seven hours they came to some bare spots among the trees with a little bunch-grass on the side of a hollow, where they encamped. A cow that had been driven along was here killed for meat and found rather tough. Even worse going was met with on the next day, the 16th of December, 1843. The snow was three feet deep, and crusted so that the legs of the animals were bruised and cut. Breaking through snow crust also makes horses and mules nervous, especially if it is strong enough to sustain their weight for a moment. Such travelling is very wearing. It was almost all in pine forest, the branches heavily weighted with the white burden. The air was dark with falling snow; the forest was profoundly still. Sombre as a forest is on such occasions there is something wonderfully impressive and beautiful about the stillness, broken perhaps only by the whisper of the snowflakes as they brush against the needle leaves and branches of the trees. All directions appear alike, and one seems to be journeying through a detached, phantom land. About noon the forest terminated; the expedition was on the brink of a steep cliff; more than a thousand feet below was discovered a beautiful lake in the midst of green prairie, and bordered with green grass. The

sun broke forth over the valley, and there was no snow or ice to be seen down there. All was summer, a glorious sight to the men shivering on the heights which they called Winter Ridge, and "Summer Lake" was on their lips at once, the name the lake bears to this day.

This was the beginning of the Great Basin in this direction, and they might soon expect to make "dry camps." After some search a way was found down the rocks, to the north end of the lake, but it was dark before all were at the camp in the charming summer valley. The howitzer was left half-way down and one of the mules rolled two or three hundred feet into a ravine, pack and all, with no injury to himself, and little to the pack. This camp was in latitude 42° 57′ 22″, still within the limits of Oregon. Summer Lake has no outlet, but it is not a salt lake.

Going down the west side of Summer Lake and continuing from the south end of it in a south-easterly direction they suddenly arrived on the morning of the 20th at the south end of another larger lake. It was about twenty miles long, and was named Lake Abert in honour of Colonel Abert, U.S.A., chief of the Topographical Corps. They followed an Indian trail north along the rocky precipice bounding the water on the east and soon discovered that the lake was one of salt water, and the place in every way was extremely forbidding. Progress was slow, night came, the lake water was undrinkable; but some holes dug in the shore gave a filtered substance that some of the men, including Frémont, were able to swallow. There was no supper this night, and in the morning no one wished to delay getting away. In about two hours' march they reached some holes or springs of pure water near the lake, where there was plenty of rough salty grass. They camped for the rest of the day to recuperate.

Climbing the bounding hills at the north-east corner of the basin, they proceeded south-easterly and on the 24th camped at the east side of another but very small lake, the water of which they were able to drink. They had passed

on the previous day on the west side of a small lake (Anderson Lake) which they could not approach for the surrounding mud. Christmas morning the little lake at camp received a salute from the small arms and even from the howitzer, and Frémont named it Christmas Lake. At present these lakes coalesce and form what is called Warner Lake, after Captain Warner who was killed by Indians, a trifle farther south. Lakes with no outlet are numerous in the Great Basin—often salt. The only way Frémont had of giving a celebration was to distribute to the men a little of the husbanded store of brandy with some coffee and sugar, which, under the conditions, was "sufficient to make them a feast." They continued on this Christmas day, following "the plainly beaten trail," occasionally passing Indian camp grounds. An attempt to strike farther east was quickly checkmated by the character of the country, which was impassable. Fresh Indian tracks about them explained where a horse had gone which disappeared in the night.

The Basin here as everywhere consisted of "larger or smaller basins, into which the mountain waters run down, forming small lakes; they present a perfect level, from which the mountains rise immediately and abruptly." The divides were low between the successive basins, indicating that at times they were in communication. The general trend, as afterwards determined, is north and south, one beside another with hills or mountain ranges between. On the 26th the camp was nearly on the 42d parallel, the northern boundary of California Alta, hence of Mexico, and below the line they were in what is now Nevada. To mark this point another horse was stolen.[1] They were in snow again, the snow here depending on the altitude; when they went up they met snow, when they went down the snow vanished. To pass from a climate of blossoms, through rain to deep snow in a day's journey is nothing uncommon in the Sierra

[1] It was in this vicinity that Pitt River Indians in 1849 ambushed and killed Captain W. H. Warner, U. S. A., and several of his men.

Nevada or in the Rocky Mountain region. The day after the horse was stolen they came suddenly and unexpectedly on two brush wickiups, the recent occupants of which were seen scrambling up some nearby hills to escape. When Carson and Godey rode after them the men ran away, but a woman fell behind, was discovered, and taken to the wickiups, where she was calmed, but efforts to get the men to come in were not successful. Frémont believed that these people had never before seen a white man.

On the 29th they were involved in heavy snow both above and below, but they kept on till late afternoon, when they saw "some low country ahead, presenting a dreary and savage character; and for a moment I looked around in doubt on the wild and inhospitable prospect, scarcely knowing what road to take which might conduct us to some place of shelter for the night." Luck favoured them at last with a pleasant surprise. They came to a willow grove, with good water and grass, the latter covered with snow, to be sure, but long and green. Horses and mules will paw down through soft snow and crop the grass. A broad Indian trail came into this valley from the right, Frémont does not know from where, but it was probably from the head of Pitt River. This camp was in latitude 41° 27′ 50″.

They did not wish to part from this comfortable stream and followed it the next day in a southeasterly direction till it canyoned. Crossing over the hills it was reached again beyond, where it seemed to be increasing, there were groves of willows, and Frémont began to think his present difficulties about over; that this stream was on the way to Mary's Lake. They descended rapidly, there was less snow, and finally they were going through a narrow chasm in the rocks with good grass, wherein they camped in high spirits. One single hour's advance the following day, the last day of December, crushed their hopes. The pleasant valley opened upon another dreary desert basin, and in a second dreary basin water was obtained by cutting the ice on a stream,

Beginning of a Canyon
Photograph by F. S. Dellenbaugh

where they camped in latitude 41° 19′ 55″. "Here," says the indefatigable Lieutenant,

> we concluded the year 1843, and our New Year's eve was rather a gloomy one. The result of our journey began to be very uncertain; the country was singularly unfavourable to travel, the grasses being frequently of a very unwholesome character, and the hoofs of our animals were so worn and cut by the rocks, that many of them were lame, and could scarcely be got along.

New Year's Day, 1844, therefore, was not as cheerful as had been anticipated a short time back. The *dolce far niente* period was still a long way off. Over gullies, sage-brush, sand hills, with no grass, the soil covered sometimes with a saline efflorescence, they trudged on south. The next day the travelling continued about the same with the addition of snow and ice, as they held to the bed of the little stream. Steaming hot springs, black volcanic rock, hills with a burnt appearance, cinders and coal as if from a blacksmith's forge, and a mud lake, all came along in a panorama from the Inferno. The camp at night was without water, without grass, without the remotest suggestion of comfort, in the midst of sage-bushes covered with snow. Several mules, by this time, had given out, and one horse was left behind on the trail.

> So, on I went. I think I never saw
> Such starved ignoble nature: nothing throve.

Then there fell upon them for several days a thick, dark fog. A hundred yards was the limit of vision. The first day of this, January 3d, the men who went for the horses became lost and bewildered, and the whole outfit was long delayed in starting. Frémont now felt the seriousness of their isolation in this forbidding, unknown land, a land of rocks and sand and dried-up seas. He says:

> We had reached and run over the position where, according to

the best maps in my possession, we should have found Mary's Lake, or River. We were evidently on the verge of the desert which had been reported to us; and the appearance of the country was so forbidding, that I was afraid to enter it, and determined to bear away to the southward, keeping close along the mountains, in the full expectation of reaching the Buenaventura River.

The men were all ordered to walk, and the Lieutenant did the same, to lighten the task of the horses. After seven or eight miles they camped in the bed of a "hill torrent" without water. Through the fog at sunset they saw the tops of the hills and in the early evening stars, for observations, which put their latitude at 40° 48′ 15″. The next day the fog was worse. Very little progress was made and the condition of the animals caused Frémont increased anxiety, which was multiplied in the morning by one of the mules wandering into camp and dying there. Moving about two miles they found a better camp, where they remained. One of the men climbing a nearby mountain discovered that he rose above the fog-bank into sunlight. The fog continuing, Frémont and Preuss also climbed the mountain, the Lieutenant desiring to get some understanding of the surroundings if possible, while Fitzpatrick explored on the general level.

The fog began to break at this moment and about sixteen miles west a column of steam, indicating hot springs, was seen in the south-westerly corner of a communicating basin, to which the caravan was led in a day's hard travel over mud and sand. There was grass at the springs and comparatively the place was refreshing. The largest spring had a circumference of several hundred feet with a space at one end about fifteen feet in diameter where the water boiled up at regular intervals with much noise. The temperature near the margin, the only place where they could take it, was 208° F., but it was thought to be much hotter in the middle. Frémont

gives 40° 39′ 46″ as the latitude of these hot springs, but this seems to be a mistake as those given on the U. S. G. S. maps are nearer 40° 49′ 46″. This oasis was a vantage point in the midst of the general desolation, and Frémont now resolved that before leaving it, or any other base, he would henceforth cause an examination of the country immediately ahead to be made. To inaugurate this policy, he took Godey and Carson and explored the neighbourhood of the hot springs, with the fortunate result of discovering springs and grass in a ravine where cottonwood trees grew, casting their shade upon the water. Such a sight in a desert is exhilarating, and dissipates the idea that grows after days of disappointment, that water has absolutely vanished from the face of the earth. The cottonwoods were the first the Frémont party had met with for a long time and they were reminded by them of the green prairies and the multitudinous buffalo.

An important find here was an established Indian trail which they knew would always lead to water, and they prepared to follow it. Fitzpatrick also had discovered not far off a little vale with fine grass and water, to which all the animals were driven to recuperate for a day. A disturbing circumstance was the tracks of Indians in the snow, indicating that these natives of the soil, though not in bodily evidence, were noting the doings of the band of interlopers. On the 9th the cavalcade wound its way across to the vale of the cottonwoods, where a camp was made.

On the 10th of January, Frémont and Carson again pushed in advance of the main body, on the Indian trail along the western edge of Mud Lake. This was the lower eastern lobe of a valley having for its western lobe Smoke Creek Desert, with Granite Creek Desert as a neck between these and Black Rock Desert at the north. At the lower end of this Mud Lake Valley they found a grassy hollow in the mountain (Lake Range), and leaving a message or signal here for the following party to pitch camp at the place, Frémont

and Carson continued up the hollow to see where it came out and what might lie beyond. The distance to the top was several miles, the last part in snow about a foot deep. When they arrived at the point where they could look into the country ahead they suddenly found themselves gazing in astonishment down about two thousand feet upon a vast sheet of green water at least twenty miles wide, extending into the distance. "It broke upon our eyes," exclaims Frémont, "like an ocean." The waves were "curling in the breeze" and the amazing sight fascinated the two explorers fatigued with endless mountains and desert wastes, and they sat still for a long time enjoying the remarkable transformation. The lake was hemmed in by mountains; it dashed against the foot of the Sierra itself on the side opposite, or, rather, against the Virginia sub-range.

At first Frémont thought this must be the long-sought Mary's Lake, but the ruggedness of its environment did not accord with the low rushy shores and open country described for Mary's Lake, and he "concluded it must be some unknown body of water, which it afterwards proved to be." The next day, the 12th of January, 1844, the whole party was encamped beside this beautiful lake, the water of which, though slightly salt, was palatable, and here they found was a favourite camp ground for Indians. Leaving the spot the following morning a broad Indian trail conducted them along the east shore of the lake southward. At first there was room enough for easy going but after a time the trail wound around the bases of the mountains, whose summits were three thousand feet above the surface of the lake beating its waves against them below the trail. This path came near proving impossible for the howitzer. A snow-storm swept across the lake, and waves five or six feet high broke in a line of foam upon the narrow beach. They were obliged to leave the howitzer, at last, on the rocks to be rescued in better weather the next day.

In nine miles more along the lake side on the 14th of

January they made a camp opposite an extraordinary rock rising out of the water, which they had been observing with much curiosity for many miles. They estimated its height as 600 feet above the lake, and it so reminded the Lieutenant of the Pyramid of Cheops, that he named the water Pyramid Lake It is singular that no one yet has charged him with comparing himself, because of this circumstance, with Rameses, or at least with Cæsar in search of a Cleopatra. His detractors missed one opportunity.

The altitude of the surface above the sea level he made 4890. The U. S. Geological Survey records it as 3783. He was farther from the correct altitude here than at any other time, doubtless due to atmospheric changes which he had no way of checking up. "The position and elevation of this lake make it an object of geographical interest," he writes. "It is the nearest lake to the western rim, as the Great Salt Lake is to the eastern rim, of the Great Basin, which lies between the base of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada; and the extent and character of which, its whole circumference and contents, it is so desirable to know." Desirable of course geographically, yet just why should we then be so much concerned over the topography of our neighbour's territory? And the long journeys of Jedediah Smith, likewise, were somewhat mysterious though nominally for hunting new beaver ground. There were probably, in both cases, underlying motives which could not be published.

Here they killed the last of the cattle which had been driven along for a reserve food supply, and after this their circumstances in this regard would be somewhat more precarious. On the 15th several Indians made their appearance, scantily clad; one who came into camp had only "a tunic of hare skins." This tunic was doubtless the regular rabbit-skin robe used by the Pai Utes, a very warm kind of cloak reaching from the shoulders to the ankles, made of rabbit skins twisted, sewed into a long rope, and then further

attached to each other side by side in the desired form. When these Indians killed a rabbit—a common animal throughout the Great Basin—they cut a slit in the abdomen and skilfully turned the skin inside out as it were. It was then dressed in a fashion, turned hair side out, and was ready to be made part of a robe. I bought specimens to send back years ago in Arizona, but before having much to do with them I followed the practice of white men of placing them by an ant-hill for a day or two.

This Indian told them as well as he could that there was a river at the end of the lake, but they could not make out whether it flowed into it or out, and Frémont began to revive the idea that this might be Mary's Lake. In the afternoon, having taken the Indian for a guide, they arrived at the groves of large cottonwoods which they had seen from some distance back, marking the position of the river, and they found a large fresh-water stream entering Pyramid Lake. "All at once," he says, "we were satisfied that it was neither Mary's River nor the waters of the Sacramento, but that we had discovered a large interior lake, which the Indians informed us had no outlet." He gives the length as thirty-five miles. The chief spoke in a loud voice as they approached the groves and immediately parties of Indians, all fat and in good physical condition, "armed with bows and arrows, issued from the thickets." The explorers made their camp in a strong position, latitude 39° 51′ 13″, almost surrounded by the river with plenty of firewood, and felt themselves safe. Not far off, up the river, was the wickiup village of the Indians. The climate was soft and altogether this was a restful, invigorating locality.

These Indians are known as Pai Utes, also as Paviotsoes, and they claim relationship with the Bannocks. Generally speaking the Pai Utes have not been warlike and have affiliated with the whites, as labourers. Their mental attitude has been excellent, being occasionally distinguished by some very high moral qualities. Individuals and some bands have at

times committed depredations, but they have been rarely murderers. They probably had been watching the Frémont party closely and had come to the conclusion that they were not bent on plunder. They brought salmon-trout from the river and the camp was soon revelling in feasts on this delectable fish, which was from two to four feet in length. It seems remarkable to find them in this river and lake absolutely unconnected with any other waters, but this occurs at other places and with other fish. Frémont named the stream Salmon Trout River; it is now the Truckee. The Indians drew a map on the ground to show that the river came from a lake in the south three or four days off, and they drew a mountain beyond it "and further still two rivers; on one of which they told us that people like ourselves travelled. Whether they alluded to the settlements on the Sacramento, or to a party from the United States which had crossed the Sierra about three degrees to the southward a few years before, I am unable to determine."[1]

Continuing their march up the river on large trails, with the high Sierra snow-covered on the right, they camped in eighteen miles, about where Wadsworth now stands, and only about twenty-five miles from the site of Reno. The next morning they left the river, which here came sharply from the western mountains, flowing thence N. N. W. to the lake. With every stream Frémont still "expected to see the great Buenaventura; and Carson hurried eagerly to search, on every one we reached, for beaver cuttings, which he always maintained we should find only on waters that ran to the Pacific." After twenty miles they arrived at another river coming from the western mountains and flowing towards

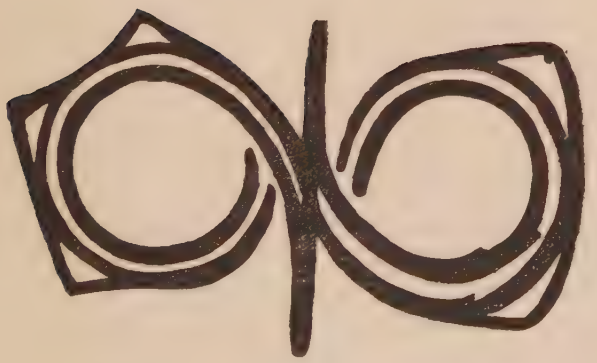
[1] He refers either to Joseph Walker or to Mr. Chiles, whom he later mentions as the only two men whom he knows "to have passed through the California mountains from the interior of the Basin." Jedediah Smith came the other way and Frémont seems not to know about his trail across the Sierra in 1827, or about that of the Bartleson-Bidwell party of 1841.

the east. It was timbered with cottonwoods, but there were no beaver cuttings. This is now called Carson River, and it sinks in Carson Lake not far to the eastward. This and the Truckee were on the emigrant roads of 1849 and later.

The next day, the 18th, this new river swung around to the right, and "hoping it would prove a branch of the Buenaventura we followed it down for about three hours and camped." From here, with Carson and Fitzpatrick, the country was reconnoitred. It was impossible to tell which way the main stream ran. Indian signal smokes were observed at intervals over the country, showing that the alarm of the stranger's presence was being transmitted from camp to camp. Going back to the caravan, an examination of the condition of all the stock disclosed hoofs badly worn by the rocks, shoes having come off or worn out, and so many lame that Frémont considered it impossible to cross the country eastward to the Rocky Mountains. His announced intention had been to travel east after this swing through the Great Basin in search of the Buenaventura River, where he meant to rest and recuperate, and not go into the California settlements. They had no more horseshoe nails; "every piece of iron that could be used for the purpose" had already been converted into them, and the extra shoes remaining were of no use. Probably they had no appliances for making nails from some of the surplus shoes.

He decided to abandon altogether the stated plan of going east from here, and instead to cross the Sierra westward to the valley of the Sacramento wherever a practical pass could be found. "My decision," he writes, "was heard with joy by the people and diffused new life throughout the camp." He was still uncertain about the Buenaventura but he had not given up the desire to elucidate that mystery. It is evident that Carson and Fitzpatrick believed in the existence of the river, which is strange, for both knew about Jedediah

Smith. The next step was to cross the Sierra in winter, a task of formidable proportions, yet he could have wintered very comfortably on Salmon Trout River, and the question arises, Why did he not do it? There were many rabbits in the valleys and antelope in the foothills, not to mention pine nuts. The stock would have grown fat on the grass, and their hoofs would have become fit for rough travelling. Reconnaissance parties could have been sent out in all directions. But no! It was across the Sierra, regardless of adverse conditions, that the march must be made.



CHAPTER X

ACROSS THE SIERRA NEVADA IN WINTER

A Bold Project—Americans not Wanted—Fifth to Scale the Sierra—Those who Went Before—New Indians and Pine Nuts—Sign Language—Chilly Days—Up the Hill and Down Again—Rocks on Rocks—Snow on Snow—Famine—Dog and Mule Steaks—Through the Pass—Down the American Fork—Preuss Wanders—Sutter's Fort.

THE stupendous range of the Sierra Nevada, attaining towards the south an altitude of 14,500 feet, and gradually declining in height as it trends northward, presents along its entire eastern front for all these hundreds of miles a forbidding, precipitous face; the sixth and last of the great barriers against exploration and travel from the eastward, enumerated in an earlier chapter. Feasible passes are rare; at the time when Frémont made the attempt to cross, they were practically unknown to white men; the mountain range was not mapped, and the achievements enumerated below were not on printed record. No scientific man had been here before the Lieutenant.

On the Basin side the passes open low, while on the other, or western, side they are left high up on the long and gradual slopes of the range in that direction, where these slopes or ridges and the river valleys generally offer convenient avenues of descent once the traveller from the eastward has conquered the summit. The passes, therefore, are more easily distinguished and approached from the east than from the west, being, to some extent, visible from below. In winter the snows on top lie extremely deep, the cold there

becomes intense, and traverse by roads or trails hidden beneath the snow is precarious. When the Central Pacific Railway was completed it first became possible to ignore winter in crossing. The line was protected through many miles by massive timber-sheds fitting in places against the slopes of the mountains, and the traverse could be made with few obstructions. Upon these strong sheds, costing more per mile than the railway, the snow piled high (thirty feet I was told at one place when I crossed the first time, in March, 1873) and sometimes shot over them in roaring avalanches. The rotary snow-plough is now a great aid in keeping the line free.

By rail it is but a few hours from winter to summer and the comfortable traveller sipping his after-dinner coffee and puffing nonchalantly at his fragrant Havana gazes across the interminable snow, smothering gulch, and forest, and peak, and barely gives it a second thought. He probably knows nothing about Donner, or Frémont, or Smith, and is mainly interested in reaching Sacramento on time. But with limited food, and a train of half worn-out pack-horses, such as Frémont had, the traverse assumed a serious colour. Endurance, nerve, a clear brain, are necessities on such an expedition to avoid getting "demoralised," as the mountaineers say, that is to avoid losing one's head and one's "nerve." When this occurs, the game is up.

The determination to make this crossing from the Great Basin to the Sacramento Valley in the month of January, 1844, was one of the boldest acts in the courageous life of Frémont; the ascent of Frémont Peak was a nursery task by comparison. From one point of view it seems to me strange that he did not continue southward along the foot of the range, where water and grass could be had, and the climate was mild. He had no government orders to cross to the Sacramento Valley, and he could have chosen any route he pleased for the return to the "States." Then, why did he want to go back by way of the Sacramento Valley; why make

this difficult passage across the frozen Sierra at the worst season? Was there an understanding with the circle that this expedition through the territory of Mexico must include a study of the passes to San Francisco Bay from this direction? Did his instructions call for an investigation and descent of the Buenaventura to the Bay, which it was intended to rescue from the British; or in failing to find a Buenaventura, was he not to go to San Francisco Bay anyhow? There was some deep reason, for the desire to cross the great range at this time, part of the "real purpose" of the circle, which could not be published.

I surmise his chief mission, besides notes on the topography, was to secure information about the fertile valleys of California, the attitude of the people towards Americans, the strength and distribution of the Mexican forces, the status of Alvarado, the late insurrectionary governor, and so on, much of which could be had at Sutter's Fort. It was patent to every one long before the date of the departure of this second expedition that a rupture with Mexico, and consequently war, was certain. The admission of Texas into the Union was constantly discussed and it was clearly only a matter of time. When it came Mexico would automatically be at war with the United States because of previous declarations and actions with reference to that expected event.

Americans were prohibited from entering California anywhere. In the words of Almonte, the Mexican Minister to Washington, the Mexican government feared that all these settlers going to California "involved a project which time will discover." That is to say, they believed that the Americans intended to settle the country and annex it. It was consequently a forbidden land to citizens of the United States, but no definite action on the prohibition had yet been taken with regard to actual settlers, probably because the American Minister to Mexico had entered a protest. Diplomatic relations between the two countries had been strained for a long time. The strong desire of the United States to

secure California was well-known; several times negotiations for purchase had been started. Our navy was on the watch for developments, and in the event of the declaration of war, it was immediately to seize California. Acting on this plan, Commodore Jones, U. S. N., hearing in October, 1842, that the war had come, "captured" Monterey, by raising the American flag. On learning his mistake, he politely pulled down the flag with local apologies. According to Alfred Robinson, who was in California at the time,[1] the Americans were elated, and the wealthy Californians not displeased. Alvarado, the latest revolutionary captain, was governor, but the people north of San Francisco Bay were opposed to those south of it, and there was no cohesion. General Micheltorena was on his way to supersede Alvarado under the old authority of Mexico, when the Jones affair took place. Alvarado said he much preferred the surrender to the Americans, and evidently was disappointed that Jones had withdrawn. California since then, and now, was politically in a more chaotic state than ever. Every entrance of armed Americans into California Alta, from the days of Jedediah Smith and General Ashley, had disturbed the Mexican government. How, then, would Frémont be received across the range?

As an exploring expedition this had accomplished much in elucidating the peculiarities of the Great Basin; much to warrant the title of Pathfinder, subsequently bestowed on Frémont by his admirers to the wrath of some others, and now he is about to do some difficult pathfinding in midwinter on the slopes and summits of this greatest mountain range of what is now the United States, then still Mexican territory, a range which up to the moment of his resolve had been crossed by white men only five times, north of Tehachapi Pass, and not once by any one who had made a map and a record of the route followed. The first passage

[1] *Life in California*, by an American [Alfred Robinson]. New York, Wiley & Putnam, 1846. Describes the missions while still in operation.

was, as already noted, by Jedediah Smith in May, 1827, coming from the west; the second by Joe Walker, from the east in October, 1833, by way of Mono, Virginia, or some other pass of that vicinity; the third, also by Walker, on his return in 1834, coming east, by Walker Pass near the head of Kern River; the fourth, over Sonora Pass, by the "First Emigrant Train to California,"[1] the Bartleson-Bidwell outfit of 1841, a little more than two years before Frémont's arrival at this point. Bartleson, who was captain of this forlorn party, was not much of a man. With a few cronies he deserted the main body two or three times.

This caravan, together with another in which was Father de Smet, was guided as far as the Soda Springs on Bear River, Idaho, by Thomas Fitzpatrick, the same who is now with Frémont. Arriving here they went up the north side of (West) Walker River, across Sonora Pass, in October, 1841, and dropped down the west slopes by means of the Stanislaus River. Walker evidently went westward a little south of that, for he got into the Yosemite Valley, ever after claiming to have discovered it. He met with enormous difficulties, though the month was October, and they endured much suffering. They were long finding a way down on the west, the horses at one place requiring to be lowered by ropes across a long slope of loose rocks. Seventeen horses were eaten and seven were lost on the way across.

Smith crossed, according to some authorities, by or near Sonora Pass, but others who have made a careful study of his routes place it from the head of the American to the Truckee, and down the latter stream to the Great Basin.[2] The Chiles-Walker party, second division, in 1843, went down along the east front from the Humboldt to Owens River and lake and so around by Walker Pass. Frémont met Chiles (he spells it Chiles and also Childs) near Sutter's and learned

[1] *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 106.

[2] The journals of Smith are lost and his routes are laid down from a few letters, and from statements of trappers.

Yosemite Valley, California
The Three Brothers
Photograph by United States Geological Survey

from him that this southern or second division of his party lost all the waggons, sawmill machinery, saws, etc. These crossings of the Sierra, of course, were all by pack-train; it was deemed impossible at that time to take a waggon over. "The first waggons brought into California [beyond the Sierras] came across the plains in 1844 with the Townsend-Stevens party. They were left in the mountains and lay buried in the snow till the following spring," when they were taken down to the Sacramento Valley.[1] This was by the route near Donner Lake and along Truckee River. The Bartleson-Bidwell party abandoned their waggons a few days after leaving the Great Salt Lake, made pack-saddles, and used them even on the oxen, which they desired to drive along for food.

As yet nobody had crossed the Sierra in midwinter as Frémont intends to do. It is a mystery to me why he did not sojourn at the forks of Walker River, or back on Salmon Trout (Truckee) River, where there was grass, and an abundance of salmon trout, long enough to build up his stock and his men, and also to thoroughly reconnoitre the region, with three parties; under himself, Carson, and Fitzpatrick respectively. A delay of a couple of weeks at this season would have made little difference as far as the snow on the summit was concerned, but it might have disclosed a nearer route to a pass, and in that way have saved time and much wallowing through the snow. It appears singular to me that they should have gone at it so blindly. They were lucky, as it was, in not meeting a great storm such as overwhelmed the Donner party, and prevented them from even locating their frozen oxen.[2] So on the theory that "All 's

[1] "Life in California before the Gold Discovery," John Bidwell, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 173.

[2] The Donner party later, in 1846–7, were caught by the snows near the present site of Truckee, California. There were eighty men, women, and children. Sutter sent two Indians with mule loads of beef to them. They ate not only the beef but the two Indians also. See C. F. McGlashan's *History of the Donner Party*, San Francisco, 1880, and *The Expedition of the Donner Party*, by Eliza P. Donner Houghton, Chicago, 1911.

well that ends well," we will accompany the tireless Lieutenant on this hazardous effort to span the majestic heights, in the words of the "Poet of the Sierras,"

Where only the breath of white Heaven stirs,

a mighty, an appalling, expanse of frozen silence, save for the wind and the whispering snow, rising into heavy clouds which at short intervals blanketed the cyclopean wall afresh. Naught was there but desolation; the playground of the elements.

From the camp on Carson River in latitude 39° 24′ 16″ they struck out to find a way through that frigid labyrinth of peaks and valleys, and though a heavy snow came at daybreak on this January 19th, they went up the river, took a circuit over "a little mountain," and camped on the same river, not far from the previous camp, in latitude 39° 19′ 21″, near the present site of Fort Churchill, 4319 feet above sea level. Continuing the next day up the same stream they camped again on it "close to the mountains" (the Pine Nut Mountains, an outlying range), near the location of Dayton, Nevada, and not very far from where Carson and Virginia City now stand. The latter place was where Mark Twain put in some of his early days, and is the position of the famous Comstock Lode, where gold and silver mining operations have been carried to enormous proportions. Up to 1902, the output reached the value of $371,248,288. The depth of the shafts is very great. In 1873, I descended in the Savage Mine more than 1500 feet, and the depth has increased ever since. Besides these mines there are many others, with the more recent wonderful Tonopah, Goldfield, Bullfrog, etc., claims. Millions of bushels of wheat and other cereals are annually produced in this arid region by irrigation, while the residents own other millions of dollars worth of live stock. The most sanguine of Frémont's party would hardly have ventured to predict such results from a country which to them was so inhospitable.

Antelope Valley, Nevada
Looking south
Showing aspect of the Sierra Nevada from the east foot
Photograph by United States Geological Survey

Frémont climbed a peak and obtained a view of the river (Carson) winding through a somewhat open valley (Carson Valley). Not another white man of course, except his own party, existed anywhere within hundreds of miles north, south, and east, and many leagues west. He felt inclined to go up this valley and mount the range by it. Had he done so he would have travelled over an afterwards famous "California Trail" of the Forty-niners, but he descended to camp with the resolve to go on south. The next day, going south, he came to another river, flowing northward. This was Walker River, where he camped, in latitude 39° 01′ 53″, January 21st, near the present town of Yerington.

Fourteen miles they went up it the following day, to the mountains, to the foot of Mount Wilson, where "one branch issued in the south-west [from a canyon], the other flowing from south-south-east along their base." A camp was established there after the Lieutenant had climbed to a height, as is the custom of explorers when working through a mountainous country, and saw a circular valley (Smith's Valley) beyond. They had been following an Indian trail (which went over the ridge on the south side of the canyon), which they now perceived was leading directly towards a gorge in the farther side of this new valley, at the foot of the "main mountain which rose abruptly beyond." This trail still exists, where it has not been supplanted by a waggon road, and it is laid down on the United States Geological Survey map of the locality. It was plainly visible to Frémont and he concluded that the gorge was a pass, wherein he was correct, for it goes straight through into Antelope Valley, (see cut opposite) and opens a way on up to the summit, but the snow still falling heavily on the crest, he again decided to bear off to the south, and thenceforth pursued an exceedingly difficult and devious road.

The town of Wellington, Nevada, is now located immediately at the mouth of this canyon, about twelve miles from Frémont's point of observation. From Wellington to the

camp near Markleeville, which the party finally reached in their roundabout course after many days' hard work, is only about twenty-one miles in an air line, and not more than thirty around by an easy road. And from where they stood to the site of the Bidwell camping place at the head of Antelope Valley, where they arrived January 30th, seven days later, was only about thirty miles by the trail they were on, almost level, after descending from the ridge along the edge of the canyon at their feet, and snowless. Of course, they did not know this; there were no maps, and there was no one, white or red, to inform them. Had it been summer, they doubtless would have discovered its advantage, but in winter everything looks different. I can sympathise with them and fully understand their perplexities, because I have been in somewhat similar situations, both summer and winter.

As Frémont gives no compass directions, and his trail is not shown accurately here on any maps (no large scale, detail maps existing till those of the United States Geological Survey were made), it is sometimes difficult to precisely locate his path between the astronomical stations. Furthermore these stations cannot always be determined with precision, for the reason that his longitudes, owing to a derangement of the chronometer, are given much too far west. The latitudes seem to be exact, with the exception of the one for Carson Pass where they finally went over. He gives in his Report two sets of figures at this place; the first for the "Long Camp," almost in the pass, exactly right, 38° 41′ 57″, but the second for the pass itself, 38° 44′, incorrect. This is perhaps a printer's error, yet he states it again in his *Memoirs*. It would be half-way between Carson and Luther Passes, where there is no pass, and where he did not go. The correct figures would be 38° 41′ 44″, the minutes having been inadvertently dropped in the typesetting, and the seconds then becoming minutes.

After the view from the peak he descended to the camp on Walker River in latitude 38° 49′ 54″ (longitude from a

Job's Peak of the Sierra Nevada in California
Altitude 10,500 feet. Very close to Frémont's trail of 1844

map, 119° 11′ 30″) and decided to proceed south up the valley (Mason Valley) along the other, or east, branch, and following this plan they passed over the next day late, January 23, 1844, to another stream and camped twenty-four miles from the last place, in latitude 38° 36′ 19″, on East Walker River due west of Montello, Nevada, and the lower end of Walker Lake. This stream, owing to its direction, they thought might be the Buenaventura, but they found it was merely another part of the one they had left, and they were disappointed to have the mythical Buenaventura again elude them.

Frémont now perceived that since Summer Lake he had been flanking the great range, and that the continued succession of lakes and rivers was the drainage from the eastern slope of that range, which, having nowhere else to go, shut off from the sea, runs into these desert basins and vanishes. At last he had elucidated the exact situation. He had been a pathfinder, on practically new ground; probably no white man before had followed that route, and no one could now expect to find a Buenaventura River there. Besides Walker and Smith, Ogden had been in the Great Basin early in 1827. His routes are discussed in a following chapter. Walker and Smith passed south and Ogden, apparently, north, of this particular stretch. Chiles crossed it from Malheur River, 1843.

From an old Indian some pine nuts were purchased, the first they had met with. These Torrey afterwards described as from a new species of pine, *Pinus monophyllus* (now *Pinus Sabiniana*) when he classified the Frémont collections in botany. The cones are six or seven inches long and as much as six in diameter. It is a much larger tree than *Pinus edulis*, or pinyon. The man's language was unintelligible to them, as they were accustomed to that of the Shoshones. He belonged to the Washo tribe, who have a language all their own, not a dialect but a distinct language, the tribe being one of the many small, separate stocks of California. In

1910 only about three hundred Washos were left. The Frémont party communicated by means of signs, a practice so common among tribes of differing language that a distinct sign-language grew up universal with all Amerinds.[1] Several other Indians came as soon as they saw the white men were not warlike. They had not yet learned the white man's moral depravity.

This old man agreed to guide them to a good pass. On January 24th, the day when they met him, he led them a short distance up the stream, on which they had camped, on a trail, and then leaving the creek headed southerly across a rough, broken country passing through a gap between snowy mountains, not the main Sierra of course, but foothills north of Lake Mono. They descended from the gap into a basin where they camped on a small tributary of the last water in latitude 38° 24′ 28″. There were five of the Washos in camp that night, and the next morning twelve more came in from the mountains with bags of pine nuts. The Washos were armed only with bows and flint-headed arrows.

On the 25th of January they proceeded accompanied by all the Washos, who doubtless were glad of some entertainment, when they found these white men were not bent on shooting them. In one of Bernard Shaw's plays when Lady Cicely is told that certain natives are dangerous she exclaims, "What, has some explorer been shooting them?" The trail led over a long ridge to a pure spring in the edge of some timber, chiefly nut pines. One of the Washos whose moccasins had given out was put on a horse and the men were surprised and amused to find an Indian who did not know how to ride; not even how to guide the animal. Reaching a gap the guide refused to go farther, though he pointed out the way they must travel. They descended rapidly into a valley, but did not get fully down till dark. Their moccasins were

[1] Consult *The Indian Sign Language*, by W. P. Clark, Captain Second Cavalry, U. S. A., and Garrick Mallery's contributions to the subject published by the United States Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, D. C.

wet, the day having been warm enough to melt the snow, and they froze stiff on their feet; it was difficult to prevent their feet also from freezing.[1] But they soon made a comfortable camp with plenty of willows for fuel, and dried out. It is really surprising how comfortable a winter camp can be, provided there is wood and water in abundance. The change from the cheerless to the cheerful is like magic.

By way of extra cheer Frémont now doled out a little brandy he had been saving. "Mr. Preuss questioned whether the famed nectar even, possessed so exquisite a flavour. All felt it to be a reviving cordial." Doubtless it did them much good under the circumstances; a stimulant at such a time soothes the nerves if it does nothing else, and enables them to relax. Few explorers of these latter days, however, place any reliance as a muscular aid on any kind of alcoholic beverage; Vilhjalmar Stefansson, the Arctic traveller, takes along no alcohol, no tobacco, and does not care for tea and coffee, though he is not a teetotaller.

This camp was on East Walker River, just below the forks, in Bridgeport Valley, and some three or four miles down the river from the present town of Bridgeport, latitude 38° 18′ 01″, and according to Frémont's observation, 6310 feet above sea level. A short distance off there is now a United States Geological Survey base mark indicating 6448 feet. The camp remained here all the next day for reconnoitring purposes. Before sunrise the thermometer stood at 2° Fahrenheit, but the sky was clear, and as often happens in that region, the day grew mild and delightful. One branch of the river came directly from the south, and from a height they saw beyond a comparatively low and open country, "which was supposed to form the valley of the Buenaventura," so the ghost is not yet laid! They were

[1] Moccasins are excellent to travel in, especially the kind with rawhide soles, which was the kind they had, but they are apt to get soft and sloppy in wet weather. Years ago I wore them a great deal, shoes of leather not being always available.

looking into the rather open district which lies just northwest of Mono Lake, between their position and Mono Lake, and doubtless the expanse of the lake itself as well as the open country south of it added to the general appearance of a wide valley in that direction. The other branch (Buckeye Creek) forked at the foot of the mountains, and it was up this that the men understood the Indian to indicate they must go. Frémont was on ahead when the guide left. At the source of Buckeye Creek is Buckeye Pass across the Sierra and if Frémont had gone that way their troubles probably would sooner have been over and they might speedily have reached a warm climate, but instead he chose for examination Swager Creek, a branch of the Buckeye coming from the north. With Carson he went up it, travelling twelve miles. There was grass in sunny places and at the head of the valley they selected a good place to camp.

The next day, January 27th, with Fitzpatrick, Frémont went ahead again, leaving Carson to follow to the selected spot with the entire outfit. He reached in a few miles beyond the limit of yesterday's reconnaissance the gate of the pass, "a narrow strip of prairie about fifty yards wide, between walls of granite rock," with mountains on each side, evidently the place now called "The Devil's Gate" (latitude, 38° 21′ 00″, longitude, 119° 22′ 00″, scaled from a United States Geological Survey map).

"At the time," says Frémont, "we supposed this to be the point into which were gathered the mountains between the two great rivers, and from which the waters flowed off to the bay." The two great rivers meant must be the San Joaquin and the Sacramento, but it hardly seems possible that he thought this the pass through the Sierra. They were much impressed by the mountains and surprised to discover some hot springs (Fales Hot Springs). Beyond they came to another stream (West Walker River), and decided to go down its valley with the caravan, trusting that "it still would prove that of the middle stream between the

two rivers." It was after dark before, on the return, they reached camp. The whole cavalcade followed their tracks the next day, coming through the Devil's Gate, and after a hard journey of twelve miles encamped down West Walker River on a high point where some grass was exposed; one of the most laborious days, so far, of the trip. The howitzer on the way had to be left behind, but its fate was not yet quite sealed, for they pulled it along when daylight once more permitted activity. The chronometer stopped and it had been going wrong from the Dalles, which accounts for lack of longitudes and for the erroneous ones given.

Again proceeding on the 29th ahead of the main body, Frémont with a few men explored a way. They saw more Indians. These natives all appeared to be entirely friendly, stretching out handfuls of pine nuts to show their hospitality, and when it is remembered that these nuts were all they had to offer, their hospitality will be seen to be of a high order. "The principal stream [West Walker River] still running through an impracticable cañon, we ascended a very steep hill, which proved afterwards the last and fatal obstacle to our little howitzer, which was finally abandoned at this place." Against Indians in the field it was of little use, but against soldiers—Mexicans for instance—it would have been effective, for Mexicans were civilised and therefore in battle would stand up in rows to be shot at. They left it, however, with deep regret, feeling that they had deserted a friend—at least Frémont did.

The stock of provisions remaining by this time was alarmingly low. The daily subsistence was eked out with the pine nuts they were able to buy from the Indians; and they had peas, a little flour, some coffee, and a quantity of sugar. They had lost another chance to reach a good pass, Sonora Pass, when they came through the Devil's Gate. Instead of turning down West Walker River as they did, they should have turned *up*. They were not more than twelve or fourteen miles by the trail from that pass. But the

topography was unknown, the guide had not come this far, the snows obliterated the trails, and even with Carson and Fitzpatrick, skilled as they were, the way was not clear. But Sonora Pass being about a thousand feet higher than the one they finally traversed, the snow would have been correspondingly deeper and it is doubtful if they could have made the passage. Down the river, below where the cannon was left, a young Washo of the band they met finally agreed to go as guide. The Indians told about a party of white men who had crossed the mountains here about two years before, and they pointed out the way they had gone. They declared that it would be impossible now; the others had gone over in summer.

Frémont thought they referred to Chiles or Walker, the only two men, he says, whom he knew to have passed over from the Great Basin, but they meant the Bartleson-Bidwell caravan of 1841. The Indians indicated, by pointing to the snow on the mountains, drawing their hands across their necks, and raising them above their heads, that the traverse could not be accomplished in winter. They pointed south as the way to go, where there was a pass with white people living near it—probably Tehachapi Pass, at the very southern end of the range. With a late start, and a united party again, the expedition proceeded on January 30th, those who had been kept back by the cannon and other difficulties having finally caught up. The young Washo led them on down West Walker River, which "immediately opened out into a broad valley, furnishing good travelling." This was the head of Antelope Valley, (at the extreme lower end of which the river passes through the "gorge" they had noticed when they climbed the heights on this river lower down, near their camp of January 22d) where they thought a pass was located. They were now down to their former level, and only about twenty miles along the level valley the other (south-west) side of the site of Wellington, Nevada, with an easy road between. They had made the difficult and trying

circuit referred to above. Of course they did not then realise that they had come out so near their former position.

The picture at page 211 shows the outlying range now on their left, hardly less magnificent than the main mass of the Sierra itself. A few miles down the valley the guide pointed out the spot where the whites the Indians had told about (Bartleson-Bidwell party) "had been encamped before they entered the mountain." [1] Not a great distance below this Frémont halted for camp, on the river bottom where there was no snow. They made beds of long grass and had fires of large dry willows. For one night they were comfortable, though not too well fed. Latitude 38° 37′ 18″.

The last day of January, 1844, saw them starting again on their way to find a pass across the icy summits. Crossing West Walker River, they travelled easily, following the guide, *on a broad trail* over gradually rising ground along the western edge of Antelope Valley in a northerly direction, through a gap formed by a spur from the mountains on the left, looming dark and threatening. When they reached "the upper part of the pass," snow began to fall heavily. Other Indians, who had come along as company, speedily departed. The guide kept on, shivering and miserably cold. "As night began to approach," Frémont remarks, "he showed great reluctance to go forward. I placed him between two rifles, for the way began to grow difficult. Travelling a little farther, we struck a ravine [still going north] which the Indian said would conduct us to the river." The snow was falling on his naked skin and he was so manifestly suffering that Frémont let him go. He departed for a hut which he said was nearby, and where he doubtless was able to make a fire and wrap himself up beside it.

[1] This fixes this position with some precision, as Bidwell says, "We were now camped on [West] Walker River at the very eastern base of the Sierra Nevada. . . . We ascended the mountains on the north side of [West] Walker River to the summit [Sonora Pass]." *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., pp. 127–128.

In descending from the pass they had seen before them, that is to the west, "a great continuous range along which stretched the valley of the river," upon which, about dark, they reached a place where there were large trees and made camp in latitude 38° 37′ 18″, according to page 229 of the *Report*, but on page 325 in his Table of Latitudes, etc., he gives this as the latitude of the camp of the 30th of January, which appears to be correct. At the same time he notes in the Table that the January 30th camp was on the same stream as the camps of the 18th and 19th of January, which was Carson River, a mistake as it was on West Walker River in Antelope Valley, a position confirmed by the vicinity of the site of Bidwell's camp, of 1841, pointed out by the guide. The latitude given in the text for the camp of the 31st was that of the 30th though the former was miles north, but the Table states the latitude correctly. Had Frémont given compass directions the exact plotting of his trails would be easier. They had made, according to the Report, twenty-six miles this day, and had lost three mules, leaving sixty-seven animals still available.

Their camp was soon crowded with Washo Indians, nearly naked, who evidently had been on a netting expedition for rabbits, as they had their nets with them. These nets, in use by many tribes (I even found a net made of sealskin in use among Siberian Eskimo for catching seals near shore), are about three feet wide and forty feet long, made of wild hemp, milkweed bark, or cedar bark. In a rabbit drive a number of nets are joined end on end, to form a wide semi-circle. The hunters go back a distance and with much noise converge towards the net, driving the frightened rabbits, which leap through the nets and are enmeshed in them exactly as fish are in sea nets.

Frémont took about a dozen of the most intelligent looking Indians and explained to them as well as he could where the party had come from and where they were going. One old man informed him that when there was no snow it

was six sleeps to the settlements of the whites to the west, but that now the snow was too deep to get over. He urged that they should follow down the river to a lake where there were many fish and no snow. There they could remain till spring. From this Frémont then erroneously concluded that he was on the stream he had previously named Salmon Trout River (Truckee), but he was actually on East Carson River.[1] He replied that his men and horses were strong and that he intended to make the attempt, and showing bales of scarlet cloth and trinkets, offered to pay well for a guide.

An intelligent young man who had been to the white settlements consented to go. The old chief told them that if they could get through, they would, at the end of three days, come down to grass six inches high with no snow, but as if to emphasise the fact that the passage was still to be attempted, snow again began to fall, and it fell all night, and it fell all day, and there was no end of snow. The Lieutenant now explained to his men that it was absolutely necessary to get across the summit of the range; that the beautiful and salubrious Sacramento Valley where Carson had been fifteen years before was less than a hundred miles away; that almost directly west, as he knew from his observations, only about seventy miles, was the great farming establishment of the famous Captain Sutter, where ample supplies could be obtained. This was well received and all made ready for the final struggle to surmount the formidable and grim snow-buried peaks before them. The guide much to his delight was well fitted out with blanket, moccasins, leggings, etc., in addition to some blue and scarlet cloth for his pay. All the paraphernalia of the expedition was completely overhauled.

[1] The rivers, gathering numerous branches on the slopes of the Sierra, and some uniting in the valley, some separately dying out, were a confusing problem to early explorers, as indeed was the entire Great Basin drainage. Frémont was not first to propose the solution but was first to elucidate it.

They remained here on February 1st and added to their provisions the dog, now fat, which had come with them all the way from Bear River. On the morning of the 2d, the snow having ceased, the cavalcade was once more on the way.

They crossed the river on the ice and leaving it immediately went up the valley of a tributary stream, apparently West Carson River. About Diamond Valley they returned over a ridge to East Carson River. "The people were unusually silent, for every man knew that our enterprise was hazardous, and the issue doubtful." The snow was very deep and a system of changing road-breakers was adopted. They passed two low huts, entirely covered with snow, in each of which a family of Washos was living. Travelling along the river a little farther, they camped on the bank of a creek (Markleeville Creek) in four feet of snow. Carson found a hillside where enough bunch-grass was exposed by wind and sun to afford the animals feed for the night. They had travelled sixteen miles this day over comparatively easy country and they now had the real snow battle before them. They were now very near the site of the present settlement of Markleeville, at an altitude of 6760 feet by boiling point. On February 3d, the Markleeville camp was left behind and they proceeded up Markleeville Creek, the snow being so deep in the hollows that they were obliged to travel along steep hillsides, and over spurs, which more than doubled the labour. Reaching a fine spring, shaded by a cedar, they camped by it and sent the stock back the few miles to the last place where some grass was exposed, and they spent the remainder of the day in breaking a road to the foot of a hill they would next have to climb. A number of Indians came around on snowshoes made of a circular hoop, about a foot in diameter, with the centre filled in with a network of bark.

February 4th saw them early at their task, with Frémont and two or three men ahead breaking the road, each leading a horse. It was not possible to travel anywhere except on steep slopes and they were covered with an icy crust which

occasionally sent a horse to the bottom, some three hundred feet below. Late in the day they came to a place where in summer the stream falls over a small precipice. A little farther on over a ridge, they saw an open basin about ten miles across, "whose bottom presented a field of snow. At the farther or western side rose the middle crest of the mountain, a dark looking ridge of volcanic rock." This was the basin at the sources of West Carson River, but it is not so wide as stated.

In the afternoon they attempted to strike across towards the pass indicated by the guide "but after a laborious plunging through two or three hundred yards our best horses gave out, refusing to make any further effort; and for the time we were brought to a stand. The guide informed us that . . . here began the difficulties of the mountain; and to him, and almost to all, our enterprise seemed hopeless." Frémont went back a short distance and met Fitzpatrick, who told him that they had been all day trying to get up the hill out of the valley, but only the best horses had succeeded. Even without their packs most of the animals were too weak to sustain sufficient effort. All along the trail back to the spring horses were floundering in the snow, and saddles, stores, and general baggage were scattered. Frémont immediately camped where he was with his party, and told Fitzpatrick to camp at the spring and have Tabeau take all the animals back to the last grass (near Markleeville). They covered the surface of the snow where they were to sleep with small pine boughs, on which they laid their blankets, and I can endorse this method as making one of the most comfortable beds possible, either on ground or on snow. Usually they slept in an Indian lodge which was carried along, but this night it was far from available. The night was clear and sharp with a temperature of 10° Fahrenheit, with a strong wind, making this one of the "bitterest" nights they had experienced. Had a heavy, prolonged snow-storm now set in they would have fared ill.

Two Washos joined them here, one an old man who made

them understand that he considered their situation desperate; that before them was piled rock on rock, snow on snow, and that even if they got through the pass the precipices on the other side would prevent progress with the horses, and that all of them and the animals too would perish. On hearing this harangue the young Chinook Indian who had accompanied the expedition from the Dalles, with an idea of seeing the world and the white men of California, covered his head with his blanket and broke into lamentations.

The night was too cold for sleep and they were quickly up in the morning by the fire where the worthy guide was seen shivering. Frémont in sympathy threw over the man's shoulders one of his own blankets. Presently they discovered that he had vanished and they did not see him again. Some of the men went to work to gather in the scattered property while others made sleds and snowshoes with which Frémont intended to go over to the pass and reconnoitre. He states that this camp of February 5th was in latitude 38° 42′ 26″, but this apparently should be 38° 41′ 26″.

On the next day, February 6th, with Fitzpatrick, Carson, and some of the others, all on snowshoes, he crossed the basin, travelling single file, and reached the top of one of the peaks to the left of the pass. From this point they were rejoiced to see down into the great valley to the west, and Carson recognised the Coast Range beyond it. They got back to camp excessively fatigued by the unusual method of travelling. The snow was generally five feet deep but in places twenty, as they saw where they set fire to old tree trunks to make camping sites. On the way back one of the men felt that his feet were freezing. Luckily Fitzpatrick was a man of resources. He set fire to an old dry cedar and stopped there with the man till he was dried out and warm, when they came comfortably in.

The whole party were now several days getting the baggage across the basin to the pass, by means of sleds; the horses being driven light. The constant glare of the sun on

the snow inflamed the men's eyes, producing what is known as snow-blindness, a most painful trouble, as I know from a touch of it. The tears flow steadily from one's eyes and there is a sensation of burning sand in them, with inability to see in severe cases. Fortunately there was a supply of black silk handkerchiefs with which the worst effects were warded off. The Indians blacken their cheeks below the eyes with charcoal; Eskimos wear goggles. On the 11th the situation "became tiresome and dreary, requiring a strong exercise of patience and resolution," remarks Frémont. Fitzpatrick sent word that he could not get the horses along even where the party had marched and purposely tramped the snow down. They were plunging about or lying half buried in the snow. He was directed to get them back to the grassy spot, and then with mauls and shovels open and beat a road ahead, while Frémont and the others worked towards them in a similar way. All of the 12th and the 13th was spent at this task. A party of Indians passed on snow-shoes going down to the west to fish for salmon, and this thought of salmon was invigorating. But food must be had now and that evening permission was given Godey to kill the "little dog Tlamath, which he prepared Indian fashion; scorching off the hair, and washing the skin with soap and snow, and then cutting it up into pieces which were laid on the snow. Shortly afterward the sleigh arrived with a supply of horse meat; and we had to-night an extraordinary dinner —pea soup, mule and dog."

This camp was close to Carson Pass, latitude 38° 41′ 57″. Frémont calls it, in his observation notes, the "Long Camp." With Preuss on the 14th he climbed "the highest peak to the right, or north." There are two, Red Lake and Stevens, the latter 10,100 feet, the other 150 feet lower. It was one of these they surmounted and from its summit they had "a beautiful view of a mountain lake" at their feet. On his small map of the pass Frémont puts this down as "Mountain Lake," and later as Lake Bonapland. It was also

called Lake Bigler. It was afterwards named Lake Tahoe. The altitude is 6225 feet. With Dodson he reconnoitred beyond the pass on the 16th and 17th, finding a practicable way. Returning to the Long Camp, it was found that all the animals and the baggage had been brought up, and on February 20, 1844, they crowned their success by camping on the summit of the pass, 9338 feet above sea level according to Frémont's calculation by boiling point; 8634 are more recent figures. Frémont gives the latitude of the pass, Carson Pass, as 38° 44′, as previously stated, and shown to be wrong, through a printer's error. The latitude of Long Camp being 38° 41′ 57″, it is plain that the camp at the summit of the pass, very near Long Camp, could not be 38° 44′. The minutes were dropped by error, and can be determined from the Long Camp latitude. The 44′ then being transferred to 44″ where they belong, we have as the actual and correct latitude of the pass, 38° 41′ 44″. The longitude given, 120° 28′, is, like all Frémont's longitudes through here, incorrect. Scaled from a map the longitude is about 119° 59′ 00″.

Frémont now felt the relief of success, for while the descent might be difficult, they would be travelling, "From lands of snow to lands of sun," and each hour and day would extricate them further. On February 21st, they started down, following in a direction north-north-west along a ridge between Silver Fork of the American River, and Strawberry Creek tributary of the same, with views of Lake Tahoe on the right, and on the left, far down, what they thought was the Bay of San Francisco. Yet so often had they been deceived that they thought even now it might be some mistake, dreading "again to find some vast interior lake, whose bitter waters would bring us disappointment. On the southern shore of what appeared to be the bay could be traced the gleaming line where entered another large stream; and again the Buenaventura rose up in our minds." At night they saw fires which seemed cheerful and to be in answer to theirs,

apparently they were so near. Afterwards these were discovered to be Indian fires eighty miles away.

They worked their way down through snow and ice, eating mules and horses as they went, having nothing else. On the 23d in reconnoitring with Carson Frémont slipped and fell into the river they were following. He had some difficulty in recovering his equilibrium in the icy water and Carson, who was with him, thinking he was hurt, dove in to help him. Frémont lost his gun and they were detained long enough to dry out by a fire. Continuing down the stream on February 24th a position was obtained by observations which Frémont made at three o'clock in the morning, latitude 38° 46′ 58″, where they reached the main stream, the South Fork of American River, which flows almost due west. The animals suffered for grass but on this day green grass began to show. The river was a torrent, and everywhere were huge trees. The next day, Frémont, being now certain they were going right, left Fitzpatrick to come on as he could, and he, with Preuss, Talbot, Carson, Derosier, Towns, Proue, and Jacob Dodson, went ahead to reach Sutter's as soon as possible and send back supplies.

On the 26th they came to a fork (Silver Creek) nearly as large as the one they had descended, saw some flowers in bloom, and killed a mule for food, boiling the head of the animal for soup. It "made a passable soup," he says, "for famished people." The lack of grass thus far on the western slopes made the condition of the worn-out animals precarious; one night without it would have finished them. The way led through dense forest, the horses were lost, or lagged feebly behind, and conditions were not improving as rapidly as Frémont had anticipated. On the first day of March, the surroundings changed for the better. There was an abundance of fresh green grass, but Derosier, who had wandered off, came into camp with his mind deranged from the privations of the last weeks; Towns, another of the men, went to swim in the river although it was icy cold and a torrent.

His mind too was wandering. Preuss got lost and did not come back, so the tribulations were not yet passed. They had now found a trail and continued on it. They came to some Indian huts where were acorns roasted, to which they helped themselves, leaving some small articles in payment for the absent owners. On March 4th they camped in more open country at what they called the Beautiful Camp.

Preuss was lost three days. Then he found the party on March 5th, having fallen upon their trail. The abundance of grass which they had now had for several days invigorated the horses and permitted riding again, and they were able to get ahead at the rate of four miles an hour, riding alternately. The country was "surpassingly beautiful" and there were plenty of deer. Winter at last was far behind. On the 6th they came to the northern branch of the American River, which, uniting with the one they had descended, formed a fine stream which at first they took for the Sacramento. They went down the right bank. A few Indians were met but they could not understand them and went on, eating for their lunch some acorns. The valley was covered with the beautiful California poppy and other brilliant flowers, the grass was smooth and green, the groves open; altogether a totally different landscape from that of a few days previous.

A neat little adobe house was presently discovered, but only a few Indians were there; the place was abandoned. Farther on they came out into a broad open valley and also to a large village of Indians neatly dressed. One spoke Spanish well. He told them where they were, and that the Sacramento was ten miles below, telling them also that he was one of Captain Sutter's vaqueros, or herders. The Sutter Fort was, in fact, not far off and the vaquero obligingly led the way. Fording the American River they proceeded to follow the Indian, and in a few miles met Captain Sutter himself, who received them cordially, leading them to his house, where rest and refreshment unstinted were theirs.

As soon as possible the next morning, with provisions and fresh horses, Frémont started rapidly back to the relief of Fitzpatrick and the others of the rear party. On the second day, he met them, "and a more forlorn and pitiable sight than they presented cannot well be imagined. They were all on foot—each man weak and emaciated—leading a horse or mule as weak and emaciated as themselves." Many horses had fallen over precipices, some with their packs on, losing much that was valuable; among other things all the plants collected since leaving Fort Hall. Of the sixty-seven horses and mules with which they had started to cross the Sierra, only thirty-three reached the Sacramento Valley. Camp was made at once and a substantial meal of beef, bread, and salmon relieved the famine. The following day, March 8, 1844, the whole party camped, once more together, at Sutter's Fort.

CHAPTER XI

SUTTER'S FORT TO LAS VEGAS

New Helvetia and the Governor Thereof—A Declaration of Independence—Gold Discoveries—Up the San Joaquin Valley—Wonderful Flowers—An Old Mission Described—Wild Horses—Tehachapi Pass—A Sudden Transformation—The Mohave Desert and Beyond—A Strange Forest of Yucca Trees—The Inconstant River and the Spanish Trail—A Scalp for a Scalp—Poor Little Pablo—The Springs of Las Vegas.

SUTTER'S FORT, where the Second Frémont Expedition had now arrived, was one of the most important places in California at this time, and we shall hear more of it in the following pages. It was located at the junction of the American River and the Sacramento, the site of the present city of Sacramento. It was about 150 yards long by fifty yards wide, built of adobe, or sun-dried brick, with outer walls approximately fifteen feet high and an inner wall about ten, the space between the two, some twenty-five feet, being occupied as stores, shops, etc. Sutter, himself, lived in a separate house within the enclosure.

The armament consisted of sixteen or eighteen "short" cannon and carronades of iron, of various sizes and bores bought from ships, and two fine bronze field-pieces with caissons, which came in the large amount of materials Sutter bought from the Russians when they were obliged to abandon their settlements at Ross and Bodega, at the end of 1840. He took all stock, houses, arms, ammunition, utensils, cattle, etc., for a consideration of $30,000, which he after-

VIEW OF SUTTER'S FORT, NEAR SACRAMENTO CITY, CALIFORNIA.

Sutter's Celebrated Fort

Begun in 1841, completed in 1845

Sutter called the site New Helvetia. It was the beginning of the present city of Sacramento. The American flag was raised over the fort July 11, 1846.

From a print in the Ford Collection, New York Library. Drawn by George Th. Devereux probably in *Glasgow's Pictorial*

wards was unable to fully pay.[1] Frémont states that an annual payment was made in grain.

John A. Sutter (see portrait opposite) was of Swiss parentage and was born in Baden in 1803. He had arrived in California in July, 1839, via Missouri, Santa Fé, Vancouver, and Honolulu, a naturalised American. He was of an agreeable personality and made friends easily. A month after his entrance to California at Monterey, he went up the Sacramento River, and settled on the site of his "New Helvetia." He became a Mexican citizen by 1840, and Alvarado, the revolutionist, then in power, made him an official of the Government. The same year, he bought out the Russians, and soon after began his celebrated fort. He obtained a land-grant of eleven square leagues, soon owned horses, sheep, and cattle by the thousand (2,000 head of cattle and 500 horses came in his deal with the Russians), called himself "Governor of the Fortress of New Helvetia," adopted a sort of undress uniform with side arms buckled around him, and altogether was monarch of all he surveyed.

This Fortress of New Helvetia had become almost too powerful for the peace of mind of the Mexican government, and Wilkes says that he heard there was jealousy of the power and influence of Sutter, "who was using all his energies to render himself impregnable." He also states that it was thought that only the force which now was at the command of Sutter prevented some attempt to dislodge him. Bidwell also states that Sutter strengthened his fort with the Russian cannon as soon as possible "because of the jealousy or fear the native authorities had" of him, especially as the fort was becoming a resort for Americans, who,

[1] Armament as given by Duflot de Mofras, *Exploration du territoire de l'Oregon*, etc., p. 459. John Bidwell says Sutter obtained from the Russians "40 pieces of cannon, together with some old muskets, some, or most of which, were those lost by Napoleon in the disastrous campaign to Moscow." "Early California Reminiscences." *Out West Magazine*, vol. xx., p. 183. Sutter says he had 10 cannon mounted and 50 armed Indians.

it was rumoured, might use and capture the country.[1] The place was capable, according to Frémont, of admitting a garrison of a thousand. There were muskets and rifles, said Duflot de Mofras, sufficient for sixty or eighty men not counting pistols, with good ammunition in abundance. At the time of Frémont's arrival, the garrison consisted of forty Indians in uniform, one of them always on duty at the gate, and there were about thirty white men.

Was it not worth while, in any contemplated occupation of California, to know something about this strong establishment so near the Bay of San Francisco, whose fame had been carried to the Far East? The "Governor" of this unique and independent fort stood on no ceremony with those who opposed his will; he exercised a firm jurisdiction. Numbers of Americans were taking up land under his grant, relying on the fort as a rendezvous in case of trouble, and the embryo city was already exceedingly prosperous. The master mind of the colony was incensed when Alvarado made an agreement with the Hudson Bay Company, permitting the employes of it to trap along the Sacramento, and his spirit as well as that of the colony is reflected in a letter he wrote on the subject, in which he declared: "The people don't know me yet, but soon they will find out what I am able to do. It is to late now to drive me aut of the country the first step they do against me is that I will make a Declaration of Independence and proclaim California for a Republique independent from Mexico." Further stating that he had reinforcements near, and could secure in Missouri many more men, he continues: "That is my intention sir if they lete me not alone, if they will give me satisfaction, and pay the expenses what I had to do for my security here, I will be a faithful Mexican, but when this Rascle of Castro should come here, a very warm and hearty welcome is prepared for

[1] *Out West Magazine*, vol. xx., p. 184.

him."[1] Evidently the independence of California began with the Governor of New Helvetia.

The aforesaid Castro had become alarmed at the increasing immigration by way of Oregon, and called attention to that danger. Vallejo, the *comandante militar* shared these forebodings regarding "the invasion that on all sides is threatened." But the Americans continued to arrive, nevertheless; those around the Sutter establishment, as elsewhere, concerning themselves with agriculture, in which Sutter himself was engaged to the extent of huge fields adjoining his fort worked by Indian labour. He was also preparing a number of Indian girls for occupation in a woollen factory which he projected.

Although gold in placers had been discovered near Los Angeles as early as 1841, and, indeed, is said to have been picked up in that neighbourhood in 1834, nobody as yet thought much about it, perhaps for the reason that its existence was not generally known to the enterprising Americans. Finds were reported from Santa Clara Valley in 1833, and even earlier than that, Jedediah Smith, on his notable first crossing of the Sierra, in 1827, had found gold "near Mono Lake," some say, but it was probably on the American where his sojourn gave the river its name. But it needed the sudden surprise, which came later, at a mill building for Sutter, to strike the world's imagination to the burning point, and produce the wonderful "Days of '49." The richness of California, in an agricultural way, had been abundantly shown by the Mission establishments, and the exhibit, we may be sure, had not been overlooked by certain enterprising gentlemen in the Far East; but when the Sutter's mill gold find came, the whole situation ran away, and for the time agriculture was forgotten.

[1] *California under Spain and Mexico*, by Irving Berdine Richman, p. 271; —an admirable and accurate work on the subject. Bidwell says this letter was forwarded to Mexico and that 500 troops were sent to break up Sutter's Fort, but it was two years before this force arrived. Then Sutter sent the

The pioneer Chiles, whose caravan, in two sections, had preceded Frémont, from the camp near Kansas City, across the mountains and valleys intervening between the Missouri and New Helvetia, was met with here, as well as John Bidwell of the 1841 Bartleson-Bidwell party. Chiles was already established on a farm across the river, having received a grant from the Mexican government. He had come with one division, from the mouth of Malheur River at Snake River, to Pitt River and down the Sacramento to Sutter's Fort. The other division, as previously mentioned, had proceeded down the Humboldt and along the east foot of the Sierra to, and past, Owens Lake and into California by a southern pass, but they had lost all their waggons with the contents on the way. The Hastings party came in 1843, via Oregon, and the leader became one of the prominent men.

Frémont remained at Sutter's, the latitude of which he gives as 38° 34′ 42″,[1] till March 22d, twelve days, in order to prepare for the return journey by the south, make new pack saddles, and so on. During this time he undoubtedly posted himself on the state of California politics and the attitude towards Mexico; also on the character of the Mexican soldiers.[2] Derosier, one of his best men, wandered off and was not heard from again, but he appeared two years later in St. Louis. Neal, his blacksmith, wished to remain in the country, and, although inconvenienced, Frémont consented, obtaining for him employment with Sutter

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governor, Micheltorena, congratulations and expressions of loyalty. (*Out West Magazine*, vol. xx., p. 183.)

[1] The longitudes of Sutter's and of Fort Vancouver were furnished later by Captain Wilkes, with whose Pacific Coast Survey, Frémont was to connect. Owing to a correction of the coast-line made by Frémont, Wilkes became angry and some newspaper letters on the subject, which will be referred to more at length farther on, were the result.

[2] The "soldiers" brought by Micheltorena in 1842 were a miserable lot. "I saw them land and to me they presented a state of wretchedness and misery unequalled. Not one individual among them possessed a jacket or pantaloons."—Alfred Robinson, *Life in California*, p. 207.

at good wages, with a promise of a double amount if he proved satisfactory. Four others also desired to become Californians and were honourably discharged. This left him with a party of nineteen, for the return trip, which was large enough. On the 22nd a preparatory move was made of a short distance, and on the 24th the final start took place. The caravan headed for "Walker's Pass" at the southern end of the Sierra; Frémont states "at the head of the San Joaquin River," but Walker's Pass, the one Walker crossed by, is near the head of Kern River.[1] From that pass he expected to continue south, with the Sierra on his right, till he met the "Spanish Trail" from Pueblo de los Angeles to Santa Fé, which he would follow for a distance and then proceed to Utah Lake. This was the trail in after years called the "Old" Spanish Trail. It was laid out in 1830, by William Wolfskill, who settled at Los Angeles.

By this route he intended to completely "solve the problem of any river except the Colorado" flowing from the Rocky Mountains, and see "the southern extremity of Great Salt Lake." Captain Sutter accompanied him a few miles and then the Lieutenant settled down to observation, and very little, as usual, escaped his keen eye and sound judgment. The California authorities were desirous of knowing his business in the country and they sent an officer to Sutter's Fort to inquire. He arrived there shortly after the expedition had gone.[2] But there was no interference with the party; indeed the Mexicans seldom cared to confront an American rifle.

The course which Frémont had laid out for himself "would occupy a computed distance of two thousand miles before we reached the head of the Arkansas; not a settlement to be seen upon it; and the names of places along it, all being Spanish or Indian, indicated that it had been little

[1] Farther on it will be seen that Frémont has in mind Tehachapi Pass and not the one he later named Walker.

[2] Richman's *California*, p. 306.

trod by *American* feet." By about the same route Jedediah Smith, eighteen years before (1826), had come into this country and his trail was laid down on Gallatin's map of 1836, which Frémont should have had. A part of the way, as I know from experience some thirty years later, is perhaps as trying a region as is to be found within our borders, except Death Valley and its immediate neighbourhood.

The first stretch was eighteen miles to the Cosumne River through a level country with groves of live oak, camp being made, not far, evidently from the present town of Arno. Twenty-eight miles the next day over "the same delightful country brought them to a beautiful bottom at the ford of the Mokelumne, of which the last stream is a branch. It was easy going now; the way was plain and smooth, and the animals, well fed, felt vigorous. On the 26th they arrived at the Calaveras River a tributary of the San Joaquin, and they were not far from the present city of Stockton. The name "Calaveras," recalls Bret Harte's poem, *The Society upon the Stanislaus*, which latter stream, made famous by the same pen, they arrived at next day. It was "Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil bones," to the meeting of the now immortal society.

"Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of order—when
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen,
* * * * *
"And I 've told in simple language" continues the poet, "what
I know about the row,
That broke up our Society, upon the Stanislow."

At this time there was no poet of California, at least no American poet, and it was years later before the young genius Harte arrived and frequented the home which Frémont established near San Francisco, and where the kindly spirit of the ever brilliant Mrs. Frémont, as well as of Frémont himself, gave the young poet that "first aid to the injured" which means so much to budding talents.

Frémont, in passing, notes the vegetation as usual and especially the amole or soap plant, the leaves of which being composed of a long, strong fibre are woven into various articles; while the root, all over the West where the plant grows, has been used for washing clothes in place of soap. In early days soap was often a rare article, not to be wasted, and the root of this plant when macerated and stirred in water offers a very good substitute. The Mormons in Utah frequently had nothing else. Another plant mentioned is the vine with a small white flower called *yerba buena*, after which an island in San Francisco Bay was named (now called Goat Island), as well as a village on the site of San Francisco. The rich orange-coloured California poppy, now well-known, also particularly struck his eye, and the blue lupine growing luxuriantly in clusters or thickets ten or twelve feet high; "a lover of natural beauty can imagine with what pleasure we rode among these flowering groves, which filled the air with a light and delicate fragrance."

The valley through which the expedition was making its way south, is a remarkable one. It is about 450 miles long from north to south and perhaps averages some forty or fifty in width. On the east is the Sierra Nevada and on the west the Coast Range, thus completely encircling it with mountains. Two main rivers, the Sacramento from the north, and the San Joaquin from the south, carry all the drainage water to the Bay of San Francisco, where it finds its way into the Pacific through the Golden Gate, named by Frémont on his next expedition. This valley is extremely fertile and is favourable to a large number of different plants. There were five Missions around the Bay of San Francisco: Dolores, Santa Clara, San José, San Francisco de Solano, and San Rafael. The others were all to the south, along the coast. It may be wondered why the Lieutenant did not visit some of the towns and Missions, as he went south as it would have been little out of his way to have done so. The reason probably was, that he well knew what

California was in those quarters, and he desired to secure an understanding of the San Joaquin Valley so that he could make a proper report.

Many of the Missions were still flourishing, and they were connected by a highway, the *Camino Real*, but they were nearing the end of their existence, and the pastoral period of California Alta was almost at the vanishing point. The Mission regime, running from 1770 for about a quarter of a century, was one of the most unique and interesting features in the history of the entire territory now the United States. Though religious in their conception, the Mission establishments prospered far more in a commercial, than in a spiritual way. Thousands of hides, immense quantities of tallow, grain, wool, and other produce, were annually disposed of to the great profit of the pious managers. The average crop of grain at San Luis Rey was 12,660 bushels.

In order that the reader shall have a clear understanding of the nature of these establishments which are so prominent in the history of the Golden State, a quotation from Alfred Robinson, an American, who was much in California on business in very early days, and who, in 1829, visited the Mission of San Luis Rey, one of the foremost, will be apropos.[1]

It was yet early in the afternoon when we rode up to the establishment, at the entrance of which many Indians had congregated to behold us, and as we dismounted, some stood ready to take off our spurs, whilst others unsaddled the horses. The reverend father was at prayers, and some time elapsed ere he came, giving us a most cordial reception. Chocolate and refreshments were at once ordered for us, and rooms where we might arrange our dress, which had become somewhat soiled by the dust.

The Mission was founded in 1798, by its present minister

[1] *Life in California*, by an American [Alfred Robinson]. New York, Putnam and Wiley, 1846, p. 23 *et seq.* A recent description of the Missions is by George Wharton James, *In and Out of the Old Spanish Missions*. Little, Brown & Co., 1905. See also the writings of Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, O. F. M.

father Antonio Peyri, who had been for many years a reformer and director among the Indians. At this time (1829) its population was about three thousand Indians, who were all employed in various occupations. Some were engaged in agriculture, while others attended to the management of over sixty thousand head of cattle. Many were carpenters, masons, coopers, saddlers, shoemakers, weavers, etc., while the females were employed in spinning and preparing wool for their looms, which produced a sufficiency of blankets for their yearly consumption. . . . The building occupies a large square, of at least eighty or ninety yards on a side; forming an extensive area, in the centre of which a fountain constantly supplies the establishment with pure water. The front is protected by a long corridor, supported by thirty-two arches, ornamented with latticed railings, which, together with the fine appearance of the church on the right, presents an attractive view to the traveller. . . . In the interior of the square might be seen the various trades at work, presenting a scene not dissimilar to some of the working departments of our state prisons. . . . Mass is offered daily and the greater portion of the Indians attend; but it is not unusual to see numbers of them driven along by alcaldes, and under the whip's lash forced to the very doors of the sanctuary. . . . The condition of these Indians is miserable indeed; and it is not to be wondered at that many attempt to escape."

Yet after Peyri finally left, for years they placed candles and flowers before his picture and prayed for his return.

The situation of the Frémont party was in great contrast to that of the month before when they were struggling, famished and weary, on the high peaks through the interminable fields of deep snow. Frémont remarks: "Our road was now one of continued enjoyment; and it was pleasant, riding among this assemblage of green pastures with varied flowers and scattered groves, and out of the warm spring, to look at the rocky and snowy peaks where lately we had suffered so much." On reaching the Stanislaus it was found too deep to ford, and they went up it five miles looking for a crossing, but camped without discovering one, March

28, 1844, in latitude 37° 42′ 26″, longitude 121° 07′ 13″, not far from the site of Ripon. Returning down the river in the hunt for a ford they finally came almost to the San Joaquin into which it empties. No ford being possible several of the cattle were killed and boats were made of their skins by means of which the baggage was transferred; the animals, of course, were compelled to swim. If horses are driven into a stream, and prevented from coming back, they are obliged to strike out for the opposite side. I have helped to pelt them with stones at a wide river to force them to start swimming. Thirteen head of cattle ran off while this operation was going on, and these made their way back towards Sutter's Fort. One day was devoted to an attempt to recover them, but without success, and they were abandoned.

Continuing southward they were stopped in about ten miles by another large river which, Frémont says, was the Merced, but it was the Tuolumne, as the Merced is farther south. There was less fertility now, but to compensate there were bands of elk, wild horses, and numerous tracks of grizzlies.

The 2nd of April, 1844, was occupied with building a boat to get across this new and deep river, and the following day the party moved on occasionally touching the San Joaquin, "a fine-looking, tranquil stream, with a slight current, and apparently deep," and in twenty-two miles reached still another tributary, in latitude 37° 22′ 05″, longitude 120° 58′ 03″, which Frémont says had no name. This was the Merced, a few miles above its mouth. It was ferried with no difficulty. Continuing along the east bank of the San Joaquin they came to another tributary which was crossed only to reach still another worse one and a detour of several miles was made. This happened a second time and after eighteen miles, they finally camped on the San Joaquin in latitude 37° 08′ 00″ and longitude 120° 45′ 22″. The country was full of game and bands of elk were frequently seen in the edge of the timber. The opposite, or west, bank of the San Joaquin

was prairie-like and "was alive with immense droves of wild horses"; in fact, Frémont states it was partly to avoid getting his animals stampeded with one of these bands that he chose the east, or right bank, to travel on. During grazing, the animals of an outfit might get mixed, in the night, with a wild band, and then there is vast trouble even if some are not lost altogether; but the herders could have prevented this by vigilance as the wild horses are generally as wild as deer.

April 5th, thirty-seven miles were covered, and camp was made on the bank of the San Joaquin, in latitude 36° 49′ 12″ and longitude 120° 28′ 34″. From here the line of timber was visible marking the occasional outlet of Tule (Tulare) Lake. The next day, in fifteen miles, they reached the San Joaquin where it comes from the east, barring the way; but a good ford was discovered and camp was pitched on the left or south bank where wild horses were stirring up clouds of dust. It is hardly necessary to say that these wild horses were not indigenous; there were no wild horses on the American continent till the European came and some escaped from him.

The beautiful spring weather they had up to this time so much enjoyed, now left them. On the 7th of April they made a hard march all day in a cold rain, with a dense fog that compelled a resort to the compass. They headed across a level, open country, camping near some ponds, and on the 8th reaching what he calls, River of the Lake, now King's River, the principal tributary of Tulare Lake, which has no regular outlet, though at very high water it runs over to the San Joaquin, by the course indicated above. With Buena Vista and Kern Lakes it receives the entire drainage of the western slopes of the south part of the Sierra Nevada. While hunting a ford some Indians appeared, who, when they saw the travellers were not Spanish soldiers, readily conducted them to the right place. Several had been Mission Indians and knew Spanish. Crossing, more Indians

were found who had come from their village. These Indians were probably of the Mariposan stock, called Yokuts, as this was their particular range. They said the Spaniards called them *mansitos* (tame) to distinguish them from some horse-stealing bands living higher up. Many of the latter were "Christian" Indians who had escaped from the Missions, or had returned to the mountains when those establishments were broken up. No doubt they well remembered the Mass, and the lash which so often went with it.

There were Mission Indians also among these "handsome and intelligent" Yokuts with whom Frémont camped on the night of April 8th, but they were all *mansitos* as stated. The latitude of the camp, 36° 24′ 50″, was on King's River, not far from Laton of to-day. The valley of this stream, higher up, is extremely picturesque, somewhat resembling the Yosemite. (See cut opposite.) Continuing south-easterly they came to another large river on the 12th. It emptied into a small lake at the head of the valley and was afterwards named by Frémont, Kern River, and the lake, Kern Lake, after his assistant on his next, or third, expedition. His position on it was in the neighbourhood of Bakersfield, or perhaps, a little higher up, near Oilcenter. He had now arrived at the very south end of the immense longitudinal valley which forms the heart of California.

If he intended to cross the Sierra by the pass he later named after Walker, because that pioneer was the first to cross it, he should have turned now up Kern River and kept on past the site of the present town of Isabella and up the South Fork, where he would have found the pass with an altitude of 5248 feet, or 4828 feet higher than Bakersfield, and more than 5000 feet above the low valley on the eastern side. Either he failed to understand the position of this pass, or he believed the Tehachapi Pass for which he was heading to be the one Walker traversed. Simpson claimed that Walker had been over both passes, into California in

In the Sierra Nevada, California
King's River

1833 by Walker Pass, and out the next year by Tehachapi, but there seems to be no good evidence of this.[1] Walker entered by a pass that dropped him down into the Yosemite Valley, which was far north of Walker Pass, and he made his exit by the latter. Frémont does not now even mention the existence of Walker Pass, except as he had previously stated that he would go to "a pass at the head of the San Joaquin River discovered by Mr. Joseph Walker, and whose name it might appropriately bear." He did not go to the head of the San Joaquin River either, so he probably meant at the head of the San Joaquin Valley and had in mind the Tehachapi Pass which he is approaching.[2] Crossing Kern River, the expedition held to the south-easterly course, about on the line of the Southern Pacific Railway, and found the mountains on their left towering very near. Coming to a stream (Cottonwood Creek) which Frémont called Pass Creek, and which vanished with remarkable suddenness toward the valley, they followed it up and camped the night of April 13th in a handsome oak grove with greensward all around. A Christian Indian here rode into the camp, well dressed and speaking Spanish fluently. He belonged to one of the southern Missions and was on leave to visit his relatives. He gave much information concerning the desert region to the east, and this caused the Lieutenant to abandon an idea he had recently developed of now heading across the Great Basin for Great Salt Lake. He saw that it would be too difficult at this time, and he accepted the Indian's offer to guide the party as far as he conveniently could towards the Spanish Trail for Santa Fé, on his return the next day. The latitude of this camp was 35° 17′ 12″ and longitude, 118° 35′ 03″, and it was so near the summit of the (Teha-

[1] *Explorations . . . across the Great Basin of Utah*, by Capt. J. H. Simpson, T. E., 1859, p. 21.

[2] Later, on p. 270 of his *Report* he says: "Counting from the time we reached the desert, . . . at our descent from Walker's Pass in the Sierra Nevada," showing rather clearly that he at first thought Tehachapi was the pass Walker had come over.

chapi) Pass that Frémont says it can be used for that location.

On April 14th they went up the right branch of the creek, Tchichipa, to the summit, through beautiful spring verdure, green trees, flowers, humming birds and all the accompaniments of the vernal season, but as they topped the pass they beheld a wide scene of the old familiar desolation. They were looking into the Mohave Desert. Nothing was green; the mountains were bald and rocky.

We here left [he states] the waters of the bay of San Francisco, and, though forced upon them contrary to my intentions, I cannot regret the necessity which occasioned the deviation. It made me well acquainted with the great range of the Sierra Nevada. . . . It also made me well acquainted with the basin of the San Francisco bay, and with the two pretty rivers and their valleys, . . . which are tributary to that bay; and cleared up some points in geography on which error had long prevailed. It had been constantly represented, as I have already stated, that the bay of San Francisco opened far into the interior, by some river coming down from the base of the Rocky Mountains, and upon which supposed stream the name of Rio Buenaventura had been bestowed. Our observations of the Sierra Nevada, in the long distance from the head of the Sacramento [he refers to the head of Klamath River which he mistook for the head of the Sacramento] to the head of the San Joaquin, and of the valley below it . . . show that this neither is nor can be the case. No river from the interior does, or can, cross the Sierra Nevada . . . and as to the Buenaventura, the mouth of which seen on the coast gave the idea and the name of the reputed great river, it is, in fact, a stream of no consequence. . . . There is no opening from the Bay of San Francisco into the interior of the continent.[1]

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 255. The Buenaventura probably had its origin in Escalante's application of that name to Green River. As for the error about this river, it was practically eliminated by Jedediah Smith and Peter Skene Ogden, in 1826–28. There was, to be sure, a small possibility remaining, near Goose Lake, but a very small one. Maps before Frémont's trip gave the Great Basin approximately correct. See pp. 24, and 44 for these maps.

They did not immediately fall into the worst desert, however, though before night they were surprised by the sudden appearance of its harbingers, the yucca trees. "Associated with the idea of barren sands, their stiff and ungraceful form makes them to the traveller the most repulsive tree in the vegetable kingdom," he says. I do not have exactly this feeling towards the singular tree which struck Frémont so unpleasantly. It was the Joshua Tree or *Clistoyucca Arborescens*, "the largest and most imposing of the *Yucceæ* of the United States," declares Trelease,[1] and its range is confined to the region lying between Frémont's present position south to Detrital Valley, Arizona, and north to the Beaverdam Mountains, Utah, in about 113° 50′ longitude, a v-shaped area. It ceases as one rises to the pass over the Beaverdam Range, as abruptly as it begins at Tehachapi Pass. Nowhere else is it to be found. An illustration is given at page 27 which shows the blossoms.

The flowers, coming at the ends of the spike-leaved branches, are a delicate greenish white and are in remarkable contrast to the tree itself and to the general surroundings. One is obliged in places to use the dead trunks for fuel, but they burn like punk and emit a pungent, disagreeable smoke. I was much interested in this tree which seems, from its rarity, distinguished, and which at a distance assumed strange shapes, sometimes, far off, resembling a horseman so closely that it was only the lack of movement that undeceived us.

The next day several Indians who had followed with the guide, took their leave, and the caravan turned directly south along the foot of the mountain, at the limit of abundant water and grass. The guide pointed across the (Mohave) desert and exclaimed: "There are the great plains, there is neither water nor grass—nothing; every animal that goes out upon them dies." And the Lieutenant adds: "It was indeed dismal to look upon, and hard to conceive so great a

[1] *The Yucceæ*, by William Trelease, Missouri Botanical Garden, p. 41.

change in so short a distance." The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé and Southern Pacific Railways now utilise the Tehachapi Pass for the traverse from the valley of the San Joaquin to the desert, but the traveller by train would not perceive these differences as vividly as one depending on the endurance of a horse, with little to eat or drink. The Mohave Desert ends about seventy-five miles east giving place to a country that, if not precisely a desert, is the next thing to it: waterless, rocky, interspersed with mountain ranges, and with meagre vegetation in the valleys. From the Colorado River north to Death Valley and far beyond, this is a desolate region, but the gold which is there has recently worked a transformation. Cities, railways, telegraph, modern conveniences abound where in Frémont's time and much later not a white settler existed.

Frémont remarks on the motley appearance of his cavalcade made up of all nationalities, including the young Chinook, who had successfully weathered his distress in the snows of Carson Pass, and still hung on, bound to secure his own impressions of the world and of the white men. "Our march," says Frémont, "was a sort of procession. Scouts ahead, and on the flanks; a front and rear division; the pack animals, baggage, and horned cattle, in the centre; and the whole stretching a quarter of a mile along our dreary path."

In this manner they went southerly along the edge of the dry plain with the yucca trees adding to the extraordinary character of the country. Another plant which he calls *zygophyllum Californicum*, with many varieties of cactus, made up, with the yucca, the chief vegetation. In the afternoon emerging from the yucca forest at the foot of an outlier of the Sierra, they found vast patches of California poppy, mingled with other even brighter flowers. Flowers seem to flourish in many fields and under many conditions. I have found them on the tops of high mountains, where nothing else grew, in the deepest canyons, on lava desert, on sandstone desert, and on the Arctic tundra. In the Arctic

summer it is difficult, in some localities, to walk except on flowers. They withstand every condition except absolute lack of moisture.

The region Frémont is now in has a minimum of rain but rain comes occasionally in most parts of it, at some season of the year, and keeps the plants alive which have become adapted to the environment. The cactus, of course, is a well in itself, and its flowers of exquisite and varied colour are some of the most beautiful I know. The fruit is refreshing, particularly if one has had no vegetable or fruit for some time.

The guide led them to a small valley in the mountain where there was a spring and plenty of fine bunch grass. They had not yet abandoned the fertile fringe of the desert. Their latitude, the night of April 15th, was 34° 41′ 42″ and longitude 118° 20′ 00″, not far from Del Sur, Los Angeles County. Men were sent back after a stray mule and it was brought up on the 16th. April 17th, they passed a pretty lake about twelve hundred yards in diameter, perhaps the one now called Lake Elizabeth, and turning to the eastward along the dim trail, the guide soon set them on their way and, with the presents they gave him, started south to San Fernando where he lived. They made thirty-nine miles and reached a point the guide had indicated where there was a little creek, but not before dark were they able to camp, as they turned up the stream in a search for grass which they did not find. A few animals were secured and tied up, but the rest had to be left to themselves. On the 18th of April they succeeded in getting them all together again, but it was late in the day when they camped among some springs in a grass-covered hollow in latitude 34° 27′ 03″ and longitude 117° 43′ 21″.[1] They were skirting the desert on the south, along the edge of the mountains and

[1] In the text of the Report this longitude is given 117° 13′ 00″, but this is the longitude of the 21st. The correct longitude for the 18th, 117° 43′ 21″, is given in his table of latitudes and longitudes.

this way they continued, often over very bad ground, and on the afternoon of April 20, 1844, after a difficult march of eighteen miles a glad shout went up. They had struck the Spanish Trail! "A road to travel on and the right course to go, were joyful consolations to us," exclaims the Lieutenant, "and our animals enjoyed the beaten track like ourselves." This became afterwards the Southern Road to California from Salt Lake, by the way Frémont is now going there. They had met with it a few miles north of the Cajon Pass through which it came from Los Angeles.

In fifteen miles they came to a river, timbered with cottonwood and willow, and having grass, and here they camped on the night of the 20th and all of the 21st for recuperation. This was Mohave River, as Frémont named it, the Inconstant River of Gallatin's and of Wilkes's maps, a name probably bestowed by Jedediah Smith. Their latitude was 34° 34′ 11″; longitude 117° 13′ 00″, not far from Halleck on the present line of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railway. On the 22nd the march was resumed down this peculiar river, sixty feet wide, and several feet deep, flowing between banks of naked sand. There were willows and cottonwoods, however, along the bottoms. Instead of increasing in volume as they descended, this river decreased by evaporation and seeping away into the sand, and the next day it entirely disappeared, inconstant to the last degree. They now camped on the regular sites of the annual Santa Fé caravan, which had not yet gone across this year, and there was consequently some grass to be had. In about sixteen miles the river came to the surface again in low places, timbered with cottonwoods and willows, where the party camped on its banks once more.

They were visited here by some Mohave (Yuman) Indians, one of whom spoke Spanish and was able to convey much information. They had very long bows and each had a large gourd in which he carried water. The Mohave tribe lived on the Colorado River, between the Needles and Black

Canyon. They were the Indians who battled with Jedediah Smith on his second entrance into the region, in 1827, instigated by the Spaniards, who did not want Americans to come into California. Ten of his men were killed and all his property lost. Smith had been unwary on account of their former friendliness. He was obliged to continue to the California settlements where he encountered opposition and ill treatment.

When Frémont started on again, April 24th, he continued down the river, waterless except for water in holes, and camped on it eight miles below. He noticed a new species of acacia with spiral pods. This is now termed popularly *mescrew*, or screw-bean mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*). The beans are used for fodder, and are eaten by Indians. At this camp three of the cattle were killed and the meat dried. They were becoming worn and poor and this was considered an economy. The Indians made a feast, utilising all that was discarded but the bones. In the afternoon a Mexican man and boy, the latter a handsome lad eleven years old, suddenly came into the camp. They were Andreas Fuentes and Pablo Hernandez, who, with the wife of Fuentes, the father and mother of Pablo, and a man named Giacome from New Mexico, had started ahead of the annual caravan from Los Angeles, and at a spring eighty miles farther on, called the *Archilette*, had halted to wait for it. There a band of about a hundred Indians had charged upon them, but Fuentes and Pablo, being out with the stock and mounted, urged by their party, rode off, driving as many horses as possible and escaped in spite of the arrows sent after them. Frémont promised to aid them all he could.

The next day the cavalcade started on its way, Fuentes and Pablo accompanying it. They swung abruptly away from the river, to the north, soon getting on the main trail which had turned off earlier, and pursued it towards the Agua de Tomaso, where the two Mexicans had left the horses they had escaped with. Arriving there the horses

were found to have been driven away by the pursuing Indians. Carson and Godey, with Fuentes, all well-armed, started on the Indian's trail, and the caravan remained at Tomaso Spring (Agua del Tio Meso). Fuentes came in at night, his horse having given out. Frémont occupied his evening by securing an observation for longitude which gave the position 116° 23′ 28″. The latitude was 35° 13′ 08″. The previous longitudes from Sutter's Fort were obtained from the chronometer but from this out they were to be from observation.

On the afternoon of the 25th of April, a war-whoop was heard and presently Carson and Godey drove in a band of the Fuentes horses. Two bloody scalps, dangling from the end of Godey's gun told the story. They had followed the trail by moonlight till about midnight when it entered a defile so dark they had to halt. There they stopped till morning, making no sound and no light. At daylight they resumed the pursuit and by sunrise had discovered the horses. Tying up their own, they crept on to a slight hill from which they saw four lodges very near, and stealing towards these they arrived within a hundred feet or so when some startled horses warned the enemy. With a shout the Americans charged upon the lodges and were received with a flight of arrows, but their rifle shots stretched out two of the Indians and the rest fled, except a small boy whom they captured. As they lifted the scalps of the slain, one sprang to his feet with a hideous howl, two bullets in his body not having instantly killed him. His misery was ended as speedily as possible.

The Indians had killed several of the horses and prepared them for cooking in earthen pots which were on the fire at the moment filled with the meat. Releasing the boy, and gathering in the remaining horses, fifteen in number, Carson and Godey, unharmed, though Godey had received an arrow through his collar, returned to the general camp. They had made about a hundred miles in thirty hours "To avenge,"

Style of Landscape and Vegetation of Southern Nevada and South-Eastern California across which Frémont Travelled eastward in 1844

There are very few springs and the rainfall is less than five inches a year

says Frémont, "the wrongs of Mexicans whom they did not know." It was no new experience for Carson.

The same afternoon the caravan continued its way. Frémont concluded to avoid the extreme heat of the day by travelling in the night, as was afterwards often done in that same region. About midnight they reached a dry stream bed down which they turned, north-westerly, and arrived before day at the entrance to a canyon where there was water. They found the water too salt to drink. All around was sand and rocks and skeletons of horses. They were going on when, within a few hundred yards to the south, a spring of good water was found which was a relief, though the absence of grass forbade any prolonged halt at the place.

Proceeding, therefore, on this 28th of April, through barren country with a heavy gale blowing—and there is scarcely anything more annoying and uncomfortable than one of these gales flinging the sharp sand in one's face and sometimes making it well-nigh impossible to continue,—they arrived in eight miles at a large creek of salt and bitter water called Amargosa by the Spaniards. Following its ravine they came at length into a green valley with springs of excellent water where they encamped amidst mescrew groves with good grass for the animals.

The next day, the 29th, they expected to reach the place, seven miles distant, where the Fuentes party had been attacked. Starting early they "traversed a part of the desert, the most sterile and repulsive we had yet seen," with a course generally north, and finally descended into a basin in the midst of which was the camping ground called the *Archilette*. "The dead silence of the place was ominous; and, galloping rapidly up, we found only the corpses of the two men Hernandez and Giacome: everything else was gone," except a little dog that had belonged to Pablo's mother. The boy now filled the air with his cries, and they all rejoiced that Carson and Godey had been able to teach the savages a striking lesson.

It was necessary to remain the night there, but early in

the morning they gladly went on. Frémont left a record in the cleft of a pole for the information of the caravan, and in commemoration he called the place *Agua de Hernandez.* It is now Resting Springs. In twenty-four miles they reached water at a place which was almost on the present boundary line between California and Nevada and in latitude 35° 58′ 19″, actually what is now called Stump Spring, though Frémont speaks of the place as a dry stream bed with water holes. In another stretch of fifteen miles, on May 1st, towards some mountains, evidently the Spring Mountain Range, across a plain, with cacti abundant and "in rich fresh bloom, which wonderfully ornaments this poor country," they camped at a spring "in the pass which had been the site of an old village." There was good grass but little water. He does not state what this old village was, and one is at a loss whether to ascribe it to the house-building Indians, the Puebloans, whose range we are now entering, or to some pioneer Spanish settlement long before abandoned.

I remember this locality very well. I found three or four miles south of Frémont's position, in 1876, a group of old buildings but they were of later origin, and had nothing to do with this village he speaks of. The houses I saw had been the base of operations for a mine of galena some distance up the side of the mountain, then called the old Mormon or Potosi Mine, on a "California Road" across Potosi Pass.[1] During the trouble between the Mormons and the general government in 1857, they worked this mine for lead to be made into bullets, but the bullets proved unsatisfactory as they cut the rifling out of the guns. The reason was discovered later; there was a large proportion of silver in the lead. The vein was about fifteen feet thick, and, at the time of my visit, at least five hundred tons of excellent ore, mined by some more recent operators, was lying on the dump.

[1] It is possible that the Potosi Mine was worked by Spaniards earlier than Frémont's passage, that some huts were built there, and that Frémont's route lay this way, instead of farther north as I have drawn it.

In twelve miles the Frémont party crossed over to the valley on the east, Las Vegas Valley, and eighteen miles more north-easterly brought them to the springs at Las Vegas. These two springs, very large, surge up with great force showing that their source is high. The water is warm but pure and palatable. Frémont remarks, "The taste of the water is good but rather too warm to be agreeable." The railway from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles now passes here, striking for the Mohave River. The California Southern Road went over the Spring Mountain Range by the route which Frémont has just traversed, which was merely a trifle north of Potosi Pass, by which I crossed, but the old road I followed returned to it again farther west.[1] Many a "Forty-niner" journeyed to the Land of Dreams across these dry basins, finding perhaps, after all, his fortune in tilling the soil rather than in washing out gold. The basins lying between the mountain ranges are often great level stretches, as level as a table, of barren earth or clay which become almost bottomless mud in a wet season, and in a dry, turn themselves into phantom lakes, a shimmering blue under the burning sun, the foam-crested wavelets breaking and ever breaking, just ahead of the thirsty traveller—ever receding at his approach. The Cup of Tantalus was never half so tantalising as one of these "dry lakes" with its enticing mirage so perfect in deception, and this entire region was a most difficult one to traverse in the days of Frémont and in the days of '49.

[1] "Still farther west from the lead mines [winter of 1857–58] there were two roads for about thirty miles. One of them was not usually travelled but came into the main road."—*Jacob Hamblin*, by J. A. Little, p. 55.

CHAPTER XII

LAS VEGAS TO BENT'S FORT AND HOME

A Delightful Oasis—Eastward through the Dry Country—Insolent Indians—The Virgin River—Tabeau Killed—Mountain Meadows—Joseph Walker Comes—On the Trail of Escalante—Utah Lake—Over the Wasatch—Fort Uinta and its Destruction—Brown's Hole—The Parks of Colorado—Bent's Fort and the Arkansas—To St. Louis and Washington.

LAS VEGAS, Nevada, was always a central point in the vast waste of this region, and it lay just at the margin of the Great Basin in this direction. It was a vantage ground on the Spanish Trail, and later, on the California Road, because of the abundant fine water, good grass, and quantities of mesquite fuel from a large grove not far from the springs. There were also cottonwoods and brush around the springs, where in later years two houses were established. The place was then on the way to the mines of El Dorado Canyon and other mines of the locality. The Mormons early began a settlement here but they soon abandoned it, as they abandoned all their settlements in California and west of the Utah line.

The grass grew in huge, tall, straw-like bunches, and when it was harvested for use at the mines it was cut with a large hoe. The mesquite roots were dug out, and broken up with a sledge hammer!

The comfort of Las Vegas was thoroughly appreciated by those who finally got there across the long dry stretches in every direction around it, and in one of my diaries (1876) I feelingly remark, "When one leaves this delightful oasis, he quickly discovers the true nature of the surroundings—a bar-

Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1876
From a sketch in colour by F. S. Dallenbaugh.

ren desert." To show the difference in watering places, I venture to quote another entry at "Good Spring" to which I had gone. This Good Spring I state, "is a desolate hole. No wood. No feed. No anything. The water is the only redeeming feature and one would hesitate and go dry a while before drinking it in a better country. Here one is thankful for any kind of water." The water there, I remember, was in a stagnant pool covered with a green, stringy growth and scum.

Frémont continued on May 4, 1844, north-easterly on the regular Spanish Trail, afterwards, as noted, the California Road of the days of '49.

> In about five hours [he writes] we crossed a gap in the surrounding ridge, and the appearance of the skeletons of horses very soon warned us that we were engaged in another dry *jornada*, which proved the longest we had made in all our journey —between fifty and sixty miles without a drop of water. Travellers through countries affording water and timber can have no conception of our intolerable thirst while journeying over the hot yellow sands of this elevated country, where the heated air seems to be entirely deprived of moisture.

The cut opposite shows Las Vegas from a sketch I made in 1876. The road Frémont went east over passes through the gap on the left.

After sixteen hours of uninterrupted marching they reached a stream about midnight. Frémont says he had been told the Sevier River was a tributary of the Colorado and he thought this was one of its branches, but it proved to be the Rio de los Angeles, now the Muddy, a branch of the Virgin. At some remote time Sevier, or Sevére, seems to have been the name applied to the Virgin,[1] probably by Spaniards who

[1] I heard long ago that in some manner the original Spanish names of the Sevier and the Virgin got exchanged; that the present Virgin should be the Sevére and vice versa. See ante page 22, where Captain Young expected to find the Sevére rising from the sands. Possibly this idea was founded on the name Sevére having been also attached to what we now call the Virgin River.

traversed the trail in the days of Wolfskill. Smith named it Adams River and at some time it was called Pyramid River.[1] Just how it got its name of Virgin is uncertain. It has been claimed that it was after the Virgin Mary, which is likely, in a Spanish country as this was, but it does not seem to be established by evidence, though Frémont states that it was "the *Rio Virgen* (river of the Virgin)."

It is also suggested that the river was re-named by Smith after one of his men, Thomas Virgin, who was wounded at the battle with the Mohaves and killed by the Umpquas. But as he was not killed on the Virgin River it would seem strange to name that stream after him. The idea that it was mistaken for the present Sevier, which was the original Rio Virgen, seems plausible, and its original Spanish name, Rio Sevére, transferred to the other river, to be later spelled Sevier by the Americans who perhaps had in mind General John Sevier, very prominent in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in American affairs. The Virgin is certainly a river which for almost its entire course from its sources on the "Rim of the Basin," to the debouchment at the Colorado, fully deserves the name of Sevére. The Spaniards, however, named things not so much from their qualities, as from the day on which they saw them.

Frémont remained at the branch stream, now called Muddy, a whole day, to allow of recuperation after the excessively long, hard journey they had just made. The Indians of the vicinity, the Moapariats (Pai Ute) were later noted for being the worst on the whole route to California, and in the days of '49 they harassed the emigrants unmercifully. They were always insulting and ready at any time to pick a quarrel, and they lost no opportunity to steal all they

[1] It has always been accepted that Smith came down the Virgin from the Santa Clara region, and named it Adams River; but there are some points which indicate that he struck west from Sevier Lake and came to the head of the Muddy which he named Adams and followed down to the Colorado, instead of the Virgin. He speaks of the Adams turning south-east at one place. The Muddy does this but the Virgin does not.

could get their hands on. When the Mormons were sending settlers to California, they stationed a permanent guard here to afford protection, not only to their own people but to other passing emigrants as well.

Once I was subjected to a specimen of the common insolence for which the Moapariats were formerly noted, though I believe they were, in this instance, instigated to it by a white man who had a grudge against a man travelling in my company, as people often travelled in those days when crossing these vast dreary wastes. The chief, called Rufus, came to me at night, after we had given him and his people all the food we could spare, and otherwise had treated them cordially, with an imperious and insulting demand for powder and ball, a demand I could not comply with even had I wished to, as we had only Winchester cartridges. When I told him this he declared me a liar and said he would come with his men, with their war-paint on, in the morning, and help himself. At this juncture I threw him out of camp, that is away from the fire. He fell flat on his face. Picking himself up he rushed off in a fury and for hours signal fires gleamed from hill to hill. All the other Indians left our camp at once.

At the first break of day we were mounted and on the move to get out of the valley where they would not have the advantage of the hilltops about us. What they had planned to do, I never found out, but they did not execute it, the few that appeared at camp, as we started, contenting themselves with looking ugly. One I discovered had an old sword concealed behind his arm. We all breathed more comfortably when, at last, we had mounted to the dry desert beyond the canyon, where we were in the open, for while we had only Winchester cartridges, we were almost out of them. I had informed the chief in emphatic language, that when he came back with his men he would receive a warm reception, but this was pure bluff, for I had only six cartridges left for my rifle! We had not expected any trouble here. There

was an Indian Agent and his wife living at the Agency at Westpoint above, and several miles below were quartered a number of the Agency employees. Yet one reason for the ill-temper of the tribe, I was later told, was certain alleged rascality of this Agent, which the Indians had discovered.

Frémont, being a good judge of Indians, did not like their actions, and he ordered all the horses to be driven in and kept close to camp. "Several times during the day," he writes, "the camp was insulted by the Indians, but peace being our object I kept simply on the defensive. . . . They were the same people who had murdered the Mexicans: and towards us their disposition was evidently hostile, nor were we well disposed towards them." The explorers were obliged to keep their arms in hand all day. A chief, contrary to orders, with two or three others, all armed, forced his way into the camp, and when shown the white men's weapons he bored his ears with his fingers, a favourite act with them, and said he could not hear; "cotch nunkai" is the expression.

He went on to declare contemptuously that Frémont's force was very small, only twenty-two counting a mule! that was being shod, and they, the Indians, were a great many, and he twanged his bow maliciously. Carson was infuriated at this attitude and Frémont had difficulty in restraining him and the others. Several horses which had been unavoidably left behind in the darkness of the night before were sent for, but the men found that the Indians had killed them and cut them up for food, the parts being spread over bushes. They used horses only for food at this period. A worn out animal was given to one group late in the day, and the recipients refused to share with the others which caused loud complaints. These Indians carried long sticks hooked at one end which they used, says Frémont, in hauling out lizards and other small animals from their holes. This camp was very near the place called Westpoint where the Indian Agency was established in after years; the same I have referred to.

The Indians gave no special trouble after the time I was there.[1]

Leaving this uncomfortable situation on May 6th, the party took their way "through the same desolate and revolting country, where lizards were the only animal, and the tracks of the lizard-eaters the principal sign of human beings," across to the Virgin River, and after twenty miles, through hills and heavy sands, Frémont says, "we reached the most dreary river I have ever seen—a deep rapid stream, almost a torrent, passing swiftly by, and roaring against obstructions." The time being May, the river was high. They crossed it and camped on the left, or east, bank. There are plenty of willows and mescrew along this part of the Virgin, so they had fuel. They found a shortage of grass but I did not have that to contend with when I was there.

For several days they worked their way up the river, constantly guarding the horses. If one got behind it was taken off in a moment by the Indians who followed them closely. This road along the river when I traversed it was exceedingly unpleasant. It sometimes arrived at a crossing place and one could not tell where it ought to come out on the other side. The exit might be a diagonal mile away, and one had to choose his path as best he could across the wide sand-bars and channels, perhaps to emerge in a dense, sloppy undergrowth of willows or rushes. There were, too, quicksands, and one often had to keep going somewhere, as fast as possible, to prevent sinking. At other times the road lay a considerable distance through the water and willows at the foot of a bluff. Probably it was much the same when Frémont ascended it. I traversed the region another time by "Miller's Cut-Off" which no one previously had been over

[1] A few days before my arrival at Las Vegas, the leader of a freighting caravan bound for the mines, while half-seas over—not a bad man by the way—had quarrelled with a Vegas Indian. He knocked the Indian down and seizing an axe split the man's head open as if it were a block of wood. We thought there would be trouble but he arranged it somehow—on a cash basis, probably.

for many years, and I found an absolute lack of water, a solitary "tank" or "pocket" being the only watering place, in the whole distance, and that depended for its supply on the rains. Near it were the graves of three persons who failed to find it in time.

To illustrate the character of this country on either side, away from the immediate river bottom, I may quote an experience of my own. On the Muddy we had been told of a long unused, shorter way back to Utah than by the quicksands of the river, and I concluded to try to find it. The tracks were old, and in the moonlight by which we were travelling we mistook a track down a "wash" or half-canyon with sandy bottom, to the right, for the one we were seeking. After a time we saw that it would take us to the river. We therefore left the wash to our right, and struck north-east directly across country, finally camping under a large Joshua tree. We had seen no water or grass since leaving the Muddy and there was none at our camp. We had remaining a small nugget of bread, with a little sugar, and about a quart of water for supper for the three of us.

This was the last day of January, 1876. In the morning we "started early expecting to reach the Beaverdam by ten o'clock. Had nothing for breakfast and no water. Climbed down and up and over sand-hills and across broad washes, and at two o'clock seemed as far from anywhere as ever. Came to a sandy gulch and concluded to follow it to the Virgin as both the horses and ourselves were getting pretty thirsty under the hot sun. About four o'clock came to the river."[1] We had crossed on the north about half-way between the Virgin River and Miller's Cut-Off, an old road, which was the one we had looked for, and which I travelled later in the opposite direction. In summer this route away from water would have been unbearable; but in summer I would not have chosen that way.

On the evening of the 8th of May, Frémont arrived oppo-

[1] Extract from my diary.

site the mouth of the Beaverdam Creek, where he camped, twenty-eight miles above his first camp on the river. There are high ranges of mountains all round, and not far above this the Virgin comes through a deep, rough canyon; impassable. The road, therefore, leaves the river on the right bank at the Beaverdam and strikes north-east for a pass in the mountains north of the canyon, then called the Santa Clara Mountains.[1] Owing to this fact, they temporarily lost the trail and men were sent out to look for it. The next day they moved a mile higher up for better grass, and Tabeau was ordered, with a strong guard, to take the horses to a neighbouring hollow to pasture them. Several of the best horses were picketed at camp, in order to be ready for emergency. Tabeau, without Frémont's knowledge, went back on their trail to the former camp looking for a lame mule. At sunset he had not returned and Carson reported the matter to the Lieutenant. While they were speaking "a smoke rose suddenly," writes Frémont, "from the cottonwood grove below, which plainly told us what had befallen him: it was raised to inform the surrounding Indians that a blow had been struck, and to tell them to be on their guard."

Carson and a strong party were sent down the river at once. They came to the mule a long distance off, shot in the side with an arrow and left to die, so that the Indians could secure it for food, but there was no trace of Tabeau, and darkness compelled a return. As soon as the light was sufficient next morning, May 10th, Frémont himself, with Fitzpatrick and several others, started on the search. Arriving at a spot where Carson in the dim light the night before thought he saw a little puddle of blood, they found blood on the bushes and signs of a struggle. Tabeau apparently had

[1] The mountains on the south side of the canyon were called Beaverdam Mountains. The highest is Mount Bangs which the late Professor A. H. Thompson and I were the first white men on record to climb. We climbed it in 1872, in the course of our topographical work. The Geological Survey gives its altitude as 7500 feet. Professor Thompson named the peak. The whole range north and south of the canyon is now called Beaverdam.

been killed there, stripped, and then dragged to the river and thrown in. Not a trace of any of his belongings could be discovered. They wished to punish the murderers but the condition of the stock was such as to prohibit serious exertion, and they were obliged to continue sadly on their way. They saw no more of the Indians except one at a great distance. It is possible the Indians had hung on to kill someone as blood atonement for the Indians Carson and Godey had killed farther back, though they did not need any other incentive than their own wills.

From the time of Walker's crossing of the Great Basin, there had been much reckless killing of Indians west of the Rocky Mountains without any provocation, except the general mildness of the race. I have not the space to recite many of these affairs of great wantonness. Pattie, in his *Narrative*[1] describes some of them, and there are enough on record to more than fill a volume. The whites took advantage of superior arms. The Apaches were started on their long career of bloodshed against Americans by the violence and treachery of the first they had intercourse with, and doubtless the Moapariats, and other bands bordering the Great Basin, resented the original cruelty of the white men. Gregg[2] tells of a case where the warriors were invited to enter the white man's camp to receive a present of flour which was placed within range of a cannon concealed in bushes. While the Apaches were dividing this the piece was fired and a number were killed. The remainder were then attacked and about twenty were slain including the chief. Those who escaped became their own avengers and soon massacred a party of fifteen Americans who were trapping not far distant.

In another instance related to me by a distinguished

[1] *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie, of Kentucky*, etc., edited by Timothy Flint, Cincinnati, 1833. Reprinted in Thwaites's Series of *Early Western Travels*. Mr. Timothy Flint did his editing too well, I suspect, and omitted much that he thought uninteresting.

[2] *Commerce of the Prairies*, by Josiah Gregg, New York, 1844.

scientific man, who was in the South-west at a very early date, some of our officers by flying a flag of truce lured several Apache chiefs to their camp, and then killed them. But it is needless to continue. I do not wish to be understood as claiming that the Indians were "goody-goody" or were better, or more peaceable, than white men. I am only stating, in justice to the Indian, that the white man too frequently was the aggressor.[1] The records of our newspapers clearly prove that the white man can be, even with his own kind, quite as diabolical as any Indian ever thought of being, and within any given tribe the record for law and order would surpass our own. In at least one thing, fidelity to his promise, the Indian seems to have been our superior.

Crossing to the north bank of the river where they had previously located the Spanish Trail, they followed it towards the pass in the Santa Clara (Beaverdam) Mountains. The transformation at this point was almost as sudden as at the Tehachapi Pass. The Yucca trees disappeared, cedars and pines took their place, and there was fine bunch-grass; the fearful Clistoyucca country was behind them. As they went over the pass they saw snowy mountains beyond (Pine Valley Mountain, 10,250 feet), and further evidences of a better land. They camped that night on the Santa Clara branch of the Virgin in what is now the very south-western corner of Utah. The Indians called it the Tonaquint. Here, too, is the beginning in this direction of the Land of the Shinumos, or house-building Indians, whose ruins are scattered as far as Green River and beyond.[2]

[1] The Rev. Dr. Hudson Stuck, of Alaska, says the greatest difficulties of the missionaries in Alaska, and especially among the Indians of the Yukon Valley, were not the cold weather, the loneliness, the ignorance of the people, but the unprincipled white settlers who do all sorts of mean things to the Indians, from selling them bad whiskey to stealing from them outright. "It is pitiful to be compelled to teach savage people not to despise the whites." *New York Times* item, Oct. 20, 1913.

[2] Ruins of ancient Amerindian houses are found in large numbers over the region between the 105th and 114th meridians, south of parallel 41, chiefly

In the morning they had some rain, a novelty, for in the twenty-seven days they were in the desert they had not had a drop. They proceeded up the Santa Clara over a rough but cheery road. It was on this little stream that the Mormons, about ten years after Frémont's passing, began a little settlement (December, 1854), the first in extreme Southern Utah. Jacob Hamblin and several others then built a log cabin and a dam to take out the water of the creek for irrigation purposes. The place was called Santa Clara and it is still flourishing. In 1857 a company came this way from Salt Lake City, mostly men who had been in business there and were leaving for California because of the prospective trouble between the Mormons and the Government. Orders were sent by the Mormon authorities to Jacob, who supervised Indian matters in this quarter, to see that they were not molested by the Indians.

When I reached the California Road [says Jacob], the company had passed and was some distance ahead of me. While travelling to overtake it, I found a man who had been travelling alone, also in pursuit of the company, with a view of getting through with it to California. When I found him, he was already in the hands of the Indians, and stripped of his clothing. They were making calculations to have a good time with him, as they expressed it, that is, they intended to take him to their camp and torture him. I told the Indians to bring back his clothing which they did, except his shoes, and I took him along with me to the company.[1]

Jacob got them all safely through to Las Vegas by the quiet diplomacy for which he was famous, but the Indians

along the Colorado River and for one hundred miles on each side. The Pai Utes called these people Sheenumo. Ruins have been found, I believe, farther west than the Santa Clara, but I have no certain data on this.

[1] *Jacob Hamblin, A Narrative of his Personal Experience*, by James A. Little, Salt Lake City, 1881. Jacob was one of the most remarkable men I ever knew. His speech was low and quiet, his actions generally slow, but he was possessed of an invincible determination and a fine sense of justice.

A Pai Ute Home

Shows the use of the grinding stone to pulverise grass seed
Photograph by J. K. Hillers, Powell Survey, 1872

there "expected that the outfit would have been massacred at the Muddy." This shows how the Moapariats, or Muddy Indians, always tried to live up to their bad reputation. The Mormons afterwards had two or three substantial settlements on the Lower Muddy, the tillable land being fifteen miles long by two miles wide, but they were finally abandoned owing to the hostility of a Nevada sheriff concerning back taxes.

The Santa Clara forked a little above Frémont's camp of the 11th of May, and he took the right hand branch which led him into a grassy valley, "an extensive mountain meadow" called then Las Vegas de Santa Clara, afterwards Mountain Meadows. It was the spot where the fiendish massacre of an entire caravan from Missouri by certain Mormon fanatics and Indians took place in the autumn of 1857. The Missouri party had met Jacob near Fillmore, and he had advised them, in response to their query, to recuperate, before attempting the desert, at Mountain Meadows near his own home. Unfortunately for the emigrants, Jacob went on to Salt Lake. Had he been at home, he told me, he would have stopped the terrible proceedings immediately; and he could have done it, for no one cared to oppose "Old Jacob." John D. Lee was the chief of the miscreants. He did not suffer the penalty of his crime until many years after, when he was executed by rifle-shot, sitting on his coffin. This was his choice of death penalty. Two others, quite as guilty, escaped punishment entirely. The Government went at the matter in a half-hearted way, although Brigham Young, Jacob says, was ready to give all possible assistance to secure punishment for the guilty.

The Mountain Meadows is a dismal place to-day; at least it seemed so to me. The shadow of the great crime, a crime so foul Indians could do no worse, stains it indelibly. The men of the caravan, under the pretence of protection, were induced by Lee and his aids to give up their fine guns; then men, women, and children were murdered. Frémont's

camp here was in latitude 37° 28′ 28″, and at an elevation above sea-level according to his observations of 5280 feet. The Wheeler Survey made it 5741, but this may have been at a different part of the valley which is by no means level. Frémont, in his Report, makes the following remark: "Counting from the time we reached the desert and began to skirt, at our descent from Walker's Pass in the Sierra Nevada, we had travelled 550 miles, occupying twenty-seven days in that inhospitable region."[1] This reference to Walker's Pass is proof that he considered the Tehachapi Pass the one by which Walker crossed, and therefore thought he had crossed by Walker's Pass. He had scarcely left the Mountain Meadows when he was overtaken by Joseph Walker himself, who then became his guide. He had gone to California with the Chiles party and was returning. He had discovered that Frémont was ahead of him, on the Spanish Trail, and he had, with eight men, separated from the slow moving caravan with which he was travelling, and come through swiftly without loss, killing two of the marauding Indians on the way.

They now descended into a broad valley, the waters of which were tributary to the Great Basin. "Sevier Lake," Frémont says, "upon the waters of which we now were, belonged to the system of lakes in the eastern part of the Basin—of which the Great Salt Lake, and its southern limb, the Utah Lake, were the principal." The reader will note that he calls *Utah Lake the southern limb of Salt Lake.* On May 16, 1844, they arrived at a small salt lake, about seven miles long and one broad, at the northern extremity of which they camped nearly opposite a gap in the Wasatch Range (the High Plateaus) through which, he states, the Spanish Trail passed on its way to Santa Fé. He is looking eastward now at the mountains where a few years later he is to have some of the hardest days of his life, the pass, by which he emerged from the overwhelming winter campaign of 1853–54, and found relief at Parowan, being still called Frémont's Pass.

[1] *Report*, page 270.

They were now proceeding north along the eastern face of the Wasatch uplift, the southern portion of which Dutton named "the High Plateaus," from their flat-topped character, great blocks of strata having been pushed up bodily, although they are, of course, mountains of great extent.[1] They are divided into a number of plateaus, the western line seen from Frémont's camp being named, from north to south, Pavant and Tushar Mountains, and Markagunt Plateau, the latter dropping to the maze of magnificent peaks and cliffs of bare red and yellow rock called the Colob Plateau, where the North Fork of the Virgin River, or Mukoontoweap, finds its source. The Markagunt Plateau, and the Paunsagunt Plateau to the east, reach heights respectively of 11,000 and 9000 feet, and end suddenly in superb "breaks" forming the Rim of the Basin in this quarter. The drainage of the breaks, or huge precipices, is to the Colorado, while that of the slopes back from the brink is to the Great Basin. The Markagunt and Paunsagunt precipices are the Pink Cliffs which easily may be classed in form and colour among the most beautiful rock structures of the world. From the cliffs of the High Plateaus, the descent to the Grand Canyon is by huge steps, line upon line, long, like mountain ranges. Table Mountain or Cliff, the Aquarius Plateau, the Awapa and the Wasatch plateaus on the east, swing up to the regular Wasatch Mountains to limit the Basin in that direction. Along the south numerous broken ranges form the Rim, which is irregular and uncertain; on the west the Rim is the Sierra Nevada, and on the north it is again devious and uncertain, in places depending on the amount of annual precipitation. Frémont has now almost made the complete circuit of this Basin and will finish it in a few days more.

Walker, his guide at present, and who, he says, "has more knowledge of these parts than any man I know of," declared the region to the west of Sevier Lake was not known to him, nor could he find out about it from the Indians.

[1] *The High Plateaus of Utah*, by C. E. Dutton, Washington, 1880.

This was the region through the upper part of which Jedediah Smith had gone in 1827, and Walker, himself, somewhat farther north, in 1833. Smith was killed by Comanches in 1831, leaving Walker the only living repository of this knowledge.

On May 20th they met the noted Ute chief, called Walker, going leisurely towards the Spanish Trail, with his powerful band well armed, to levy his annual tax upon the caravan that was approaching. Joseph Walker knew him, and made him acquainted with Frémont of whom he had heard. They exchanged presents according to Amerindian custom and all was well. W. L. Manly came upon Chief Walker and his tribe in Uinta Valley, on Green River, in 1849, and the chief was very kind to him and his forlorn companions who had all come thus far perilously in a boat down Green River, and he persuaded them to desist from their attempt to descend by water.[1] May 23, 1844, Frémont's party arrived at the Sevier River where they made a raft of bulrushes for crossing, as the river is deep and the banks precipitous. With ropes they pulled the raft back and forth till everything was over. The Sevier rises far south on the Rim, between Markagunt and Paunsagunt plateaus, flows north, and then swings sharply around, south-west to Sevier Lake. The encampment was at the most northern part of the bend, latitude 39° 22′ 19″, as given in the report, an error for 39° 32′ 19″. He says the river was probably named after some American trapper or hunter.[2] It was the first American name they had met with since leaving the Columbia.

Here an accident of a kind which was very common in the '49 days, and after, killed one of the men named François Badeau; he pulled a gun towards him by the muzzle; the ball went through his head. I have heard experienced men say they believed more lives were lost by this sort of carelessness than by Indians.

[1] *Death Valley in '49*, by William L. Manly, p. 91.

[2] See *ante*, this chapter, for remarks on the name of Sevier River.

A Pioneer Cabin

One of the Faithful

A handsome valley was entered the next day, May 24th, evidently Tintic Valley, and they proceeded over to a small tributary of Utah Lake where they camped, moving on the following day to a camp on Spanish Fork. Three Utes who had joined them became troublesome, and the camp was moved on May 26th, to a bottom farther north "down the lake." There were two villages of Utes near-by, one near the mouth of Spanish Fork and one farther down the lake. From the latter some salmon trout were purchased.

The greatest breadth of Utah Lake, the Lieutenant states, "is about fifteen miles, stretching far to the north, narrowing as it goes, and connecting with the Great Salt Lake. This is the report, and which I believe to be correct; but it is fresh water, while the other is not only salt, but a saturated solution of salt; and here is a problem which requires to be solved."[1] This is the passage in the report referred to by Brigham Young. Frémont wrote a letter which was published in New York in 1877,[2] in which he quotes an interview between Eli Perkins and Brigham, wherein the latter made the statement that Frémont thought Salt Lake and Utah Lake one, and Frémont to contradict it printed some quotations from his Report, but he does not give this nor the others noted above. He certainly stated: (1) that Utah Lake and Salt Lake were connected; (2) that Utah Lake was fresh water while the other was salt; (3) that this is a problem which requires to be solved. He also spoke of Utah Lake as the southern limb of Great Salt Lake,[3] and that he "had seen that remarkable sheet of water both at its northern and southern extremity." It looks, therefore, as if he actually *did make the mistake* which Brigham Young charged.

Had he ridden a few miles north from his camp near Spanish Fork, he would have found the river, now called the Jordan, flowing *out* of Utah Lake, and would also have discovered that a wide belt of solid land intervenes between

[1] *Report*, p. 273; *Memoirs*, p. 388.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 415.
[3] *Report*, p. 274.

the two lakes, a belt thirty or more miles across. Walker must have known that Utah Lake was not connected with the Great Lake, yet he does not seem to have informed the Lieutenant on that point. But he did describe the Great Basin, and Frémont now concludes definitely, from this and his own observations, that the Columbia is the only river which traverses the whole breadth of the country to the Pacific, and the Buenaventura myth is dead and gone forever. "The existence of the Basin is therefore an established fact in my mind; its extent and contents are yet to be ascertained."[1]

He had now seen more of this Basin than any other white man with the exception, perhaps, of Walker; but Walker had no knowledge by experience with that portion lying north of Pyramid Lake along the flank of the Sierra. Frémont's estimates and deductions concerning the immense interior country were remarkably accurate even to its approximate area. "It is called a desert," he says, "and from what I saw of it, sterility may be its prominent characteristic; but where there is so much water there must be some oasis, . . . where there is so much snow there must be streams; and where there is no outlet there must be lakes to hold the accumulated waters, or sands to swallow them up."

The expedition left Utah Lake, May 27, 1844, and for two days went up Spanish Fork into the Wasatch Mountains, for Frémont was not content to go the few miles north to his former outward camp near the present town of Ogden, and so return easily by the travelled Oregon Trail; he wanted to know what the Wasatch and the country east of this range were like, and he, therefore, strikes that way. He was an untiring explorer; the love of penetrating what is uncertain was fixed by nature in his heart, but in addition to this indomitable spirit was the one which believed that all this country was very soon to fall to the United States, and the desire to be prepared to exhibit to his countrymen, which

[1] *Report*, p. 276.

he did most lucidly, its extent and character from the scientific point of view.

Their camp, on the 27th, was in latitude 40° 04′ 27″ on a right hand or south branch, and on the 28th in latitude 39° 55′ 11″ at its headwaters. A few miles beyond this they came to the divide of the Great Basin and the Colorado River streams and, "by an open and easy pass," they went over to the waters of what was then called White River, because of the colour of its water, now Price River. Going up a small branch of this, continually under the guidance of Walker, the trail led to the headwaters of the Uinta River, through some narrow ravines. The latitude of the head of the Uinta was 40° 00′ 07″, camp of May 29th.

Continuing north down this small branch, they reached Strawberry Creek, as the main branch here is now called, and crossing it, went up another small branch named Red River also from the colour of its water. This was all in a very rugged country. At night they camped on the Duchesne Fork of the Uinta, at the place where they reached it, and next day they went down it about sixteen miles to camp on it again in latitude 40° 18′ 52″ and longitude 112° 18′ 30″. The longitude is far from correct and seems to be a printer's error for 110° 28′ 30″, which is about where they were.

On the first day of June the expedition, from the camp on the Duchesne, crossed a stretch of broken country in a distance of about sixteen miles, as the trail went, to the Lake Fork of the Uinta, which was a stream of such great velocity that, at this time of high water, "there is an uninterrupted noise from the large rocks which are rolled along the bed." Rock rolling is not an uncommon occurrence in the river beds of the Rocky Mountain Region which have great declivity. In Cataract Canyon the Colorado performs this feat on a grand scale and huge boulders are tumbled along with a noise like distant thunder.

Frémont was obliged to construct a bridge. At length

all were safely across except one animal which was lost. Proceeding across country in a north-easterly direction, they arrived on June 3d at Fort Uinta, a post belonging to Roubideau, a well-known trader of the time. This was on the Uinta River where the U. S. Indian Agency was established at a later date. The latitude Frémont gives as 40° 27′ 45″ and the longitude 109° 56′ 42″. There were a number of Canadians and Spaniards there, but Roubideau himself was absent and he thereby escaped the fate that befell all the rest, a short time after Frémont passed. The place was captured by the Utes; the men were all killed and the women (Indians) carried off.

Frémont, after securing at the doomed fort, some sugar, coffee, dried meat, and a cow, and a new member of the party as well, Auguste Archambeau, continued his way on the morning of June 5th, reaching, in twenty-five miles, Ashley's Fork of Green River now Ashley Creek.

To the right of the travellers now was the great Uinta Valley, for a thousand miles the longest opening on the Green and Colorado rivers free from canyons. Just above the mouth of Ashley Creek is the end of Split-Mountain Canyon, the termination also of the first section of canyons, beginning with Flaming Gorge, and broken only by Brown's Hole towards which the caravan is heading.[1] Frémont kept to the left or west of these gorges, camping high up on the mountainside on the night of the 6th of June at an altitude of 7300 feet, whence they had "a view of the Colorado below, shut up amongst rugged mountains." He is hardly near enough to any canyon to be looking into it, and I surmise he sees the river in Island Park, a brief interval between Whirlpool and Split-Mountain canyons. It was in Uinta Valley (which extends from Split Mountain to the Canyon

[1] The canyons of the Colorado may be divided into five general groups: (1) from Flaming Gorge to Uinta Valley; (2) Uinta Valley to Gunnison Crossing; (3) Gunnison Crossing to the mouth of the Paria (Pahreeah); (4) the Paria to the Grand Wash; and 5, all below that point.

The Canyon of Lodore, Green River, Wyoming

Frémont in 1844 passed just west of this canyon going north and at one point could look down into it. This canyon is twenty miles long and 2500 feet deep

Photograph by E. O. Beaman

of Desolation), where the parallel of 40° 19′ cuts the Green, that Escalante crossed in 1776 and travelled west as far as Utah Lake by very much the same route that Frémont has just come over. The Escalante account says 41° 19′, but that would be in Green River Valley, which is out of the question. There is a mistake of one degree.

After a pleasant journey, on May 7th, through beautiful little valleys and a high mountain country (east end of the Uinta Mountains) they descended at evening through a steep and rocky ravine into Brown's "Hole," now Brown's Park, the name having been changed by Major Powell for the sake of euphony, and because the "Hole" is a fine park-like valley, and not a hole in any sense. I once met a pioneer who was much nettled at what he considered an unwarranted liberty which Powell had taken with this established name of the country. On the way down they killed several mountain sheep. The park is eighteen or twenty miles long and the river meanders slowly through it.

Brown's Hole was a noted place in the fur-trading days, and Fort Davy Crockett stood on the left bank not far from where Frémont encamped after crossing the expanse of Green River, a width of several hundred yards at this season, the river being swollen to the top of its bank. It took a day to get over. Frémont states that he was informed that the lower end of the valley was the most eastern point of the Colorado, which is correct. The latitude of the camp was 40° 46′ 27″, only a couple of miles above the place where the river disappears, through the magnificent Gate of Lodore, into Lodore Canyon,[1] a gateway of solid, bare red rocks two thousand feet high, bearing from the camp south, 20° east. Near the camp was the ruin of an old fort which was probably Fort Davy Crockett, owned by Thompson, Craig, and St. Clair.

The Fort [Davy Crockett] [said Farnham, who visited it in 1839] is a hollow square of one story log cabins, with roofs and

[1] Named from Southey's poem.

floors of mud, constructed in the same manner as those of Fort William [Bent's]. Around these we found the conical skin lodges of the squaws of the white trappers, who were away on their fall hunt, and also the lodges of a few Snake Indians who had preceded their tribe to this, their winter haunt. . . . And indeed when all the independent trappers are driven by approaching winter into this delightful retreat; and the whole Snake village 2 or 3000 strong . . . pitch their lodges around the Fort, and the dances and merry makings of a long winter are thoroughly commenced, there is no want of customers [for the wares of a trader named Robinson].

When Major Powell on his second descent of the Colorado, on which I accompanied him, arrived here he camped for several days at the Gate of Lodore. In this canyon the fall is continuous and violent, and at high water the descent through it in a boat is hazardous, but feasible for cautious persons with proper boats and life jackets.

Leaving Brown's Park by the east end, up Vermilion Creek, they followed a small branch into a remarkable canyon very narrow, and on leaving it they were soon in another about 1500 feet deep and narrower than the last. Coming through this, in a north direction, they reached a small pond beside which they made the noon camp. Then came a rough country, barren and dry. They camped on Vermilion Creek, and the next day, after passing through a similar region, night found them on the "Elk Head River," in latitude 41° 01′ 48″. This appears to be the Little Snake River of to-day, Elk Head Creek being farther south in Colorado, and like Little Snake, a tributary of the Yampa. A second time they camped on Little Snake in latitude 41° 01′ 11″. He calls this the principal fork of the Yampa which identifies it as Little Snake. Walker and Carson as well as Fitzpatrick must have had the names of the rivers as they were known to the trappers of that day, but Frémont either misunderstood them, or the Little Snake was then also called Elk Head.

This region was considered a very dangerous one on account of the hostility of Indians ranging here, and strong measures for defence were taken. On the 11th of June, the caravan continued up this stream and camped near the mouth of St. Vrain's Fork, up which the trail led. A few miles farther on was the place where Fraeb had been killed and his party so badly cut to pieces by the Indians. They passed a place where Carson's party once was attacked at close range and one of his men received five bullets in his body. The region abounded in good water and grass, and the hunters brought in mountain sheep and buffalo meat. Antelope and elk were started up and the country appeared to be full of game.

St. Vrain's Fork was left on June 13, 1844, and they headed for the summit of "the dividing ridge," and at noon by a good trail stood on the top at an altitude of eight thousand feet. They rejoiced once more to be on waters of the eastern slope and descended a little stream called Pullam's Fork, a tributary of the Platte. In the afternoon they saw before them the valley of the North Platte, with other familiar sights, and now had fairly completed their long circuit. Frémont had still no intention of following his former road back. Instead, he wished to investigate the "three parks," to the south, and he turned up the North Platte in that direction. There was an abundance of water, plenty of wood, and all kinds of game, as well as fine trout in the streams, which he does not mention, probably not having tried to catch any. As they went up the river the valley narrowed, till it became a gorge through which they passed into "New Park," as the trappers then called North Park, "a beautiful circular valley of thirty miles in diameter walled in all round with snowy mountains, rich with water and grass." It had an area of seven hundred square miles of grazing land. On June 15th, they camped just where the river enters the gorge in latitude 40° 52′ 44″ at an altitude of 7720 feet. Marching on south up the North Platte, West Fork, in this delightful region, they

passed over the Continental Divide again, on June 17th, by an easy trail, through Muddy Pass, as it is now called, "a pass which was one of the most beautiful we had ever seen." They were now in Middle Park, and once more on the waters of the Colorado. This valley they called by the name of that time, "Old Park."

That night they camped on "a small tributary of Grand River," the Muddy. When they started in the morning, their scouts soon signalled from a hill "Indians." It was a party of thirty Arapahos, men, women, and children. Their village was not a great way off, and when Frémont had made them some presents they quickly returned to it apparently in no friendly mood. The caravan was immediately placed in as defensive a position as possible on the banks of Grand River, in an open place among the willows, with the river behind. Barely had these hasty preparations been completed when about two hundred warriors in battle array appeared. The American flag was planted between, and a truce followed; then a treaty of peace, but the travellers were obliged to go to the village and camp there, which they did in as strong a position as they could secure. Nothing happened except a few articles stolen. In the morning they said farewell to their imperative hosts, and proceeded for about eight miles, when they came to the canyon by which Grand River leaves the valley, and camped in latitude 39° 57′ 26″. Here they ferried over the goods and made the animals swim. The Blue River comes in at this place and Frémont mentions it but not by name. Up the left or west bank of this stream on the 20th, they journeyed crossing numerous foaming torrents, surrounded by the fragrance of pines amid delightful weather. There were many buffalo and "the hunters came into camp with the meat of seven cows."

A fire they saw opposite their camp that night proved to be that of six trappers, who joined them in the morning. Two of their number had been killed by Indians; one recently, while out alone, by the Arapahos just passed. The Frémont

hunters went back with the trappers to bring up their camp, but while there all were surrounded by a party of the Arapahos who said the whole village was now moving over to Bayou Salade (South Park) to attack a large force of Utes, and they wanted the white men to go along and help. Carson told them the party was too far ahead to turn back, but would join them in the Bayou Salade, which satisfied them, and they went forward to the fray. The caravan gradually ascended the middle branch that had been chosen some distance back, while the Arapahos had gone by a left-hand one that led to a better pass. In the afternoon the great divide was reached, at an altitude estimated, from an observation 800 feet lower, to be 11,200 feet. The two chief passes in this vicinity are Hoosier and Breckenridge, three or four miles apart along the divide. Hoosier is 10,309, and Breckenridge, 11,503. Judging from the altitude it was Hoosier Pass by which the Frémont party crossed.

Immediately below was a green valley; South Park, then called Bayou Salade.[1] They descended to a small creek and camped in latitude 39° 20′ 24″. Frémont thought this might be the head of the Fontaine qui Bouit or the "remotest head of the South Fork of the Platte." It was the latter. Information he had obtained told him the head of the main Arkansas River was just across "the rocky wall" (west), and this was correct. He had no time to cross over to it for investigation, and on the 23d of June, 1844, he kept on down the stream they were on, by an excellent buffalo trail. Near the middle of the day they discovered a cavalcade of Indians coming down a slope, and they hastened to secure themselves in good order for a battle, for it was thought this might be the party of Arapaho warriors, returning from their attack on the Utes. It turned out to be a party of women of the Ute band which was the object of the Arapaho expedition, and

[1] Farnham says it was called Bayou Salade, "from the circumstance that native rock salt is found in some parts of it."—*Travels in the Great Western Prairies*, end of chapter iv.

which they said was now engaged in the fight. At the prospect of battle, the Indian custom is to send their women and children to some place of safety, or at least away from the battle-ground. "They filled the air with cries and lamentations which made us understand that some of their chiefs had been killed." On the other side of a low, piney ridge directly ahead, the battle was going on, only a few hundred yards away, and the women implored the white men to go over and assist their men, who, though taken by surprise, were, in their opinion, now rather getting the best of the situation.

The cracking of rifles was plainly heard and it was an exciting moment, but Frémont, though a young man, was, as we have seen, judicious, and he had no desire to become involved in this affair, so he kept cautiously along, with the pines between him and the battle-field, with men on the top of the ridge to give any necessary warning. "As we passed by the village, which was immediately below us, horsemen were galloping to and fro, and groups of people were gathered around those who were wounded or dead, and who were being brought in from the field. We continued to press on, and, crossing another fork, which came in from the right, after having made fifteen miles from the village, fortified ourselves strongly in the pines, a short distance from the river."

They had plainly seen Pike's Peak during the afternoon and from this camp it bore N. 87, E., by compass. They left the river the next day, the 24th of June, 1844, and bearing south-easterly had several days' very hard travel, in a rugged mountainous district, and on the morning of the 28th, found themselves at the eastern foot of the range. The main road, from South Park, afterwards went down Currant Creek to the Arkansas, and there was undoubtedly an Indian trail that way, but Frémont appears to have cut across to Oil Creek, then to the head of Ute Creek, and finally to Beaver Creek, which he descended to the valley, a

very difficult and laborious road. This particular region seems to have been the one in which he was fated to have a hard time, and here, Pike before him, had gone through some fearful experiences. Vilhjalmar Stefansson has said that, "Adventure is the result of incompetence on the part of someone," and this is a truth, though one which some, who have had adventures, do not willingly admit, particularly when the incompetence is brought home to themselves.

The party was soon at Pueblo, arriving on the 28th of June, and they found the place flourishing. They met some old acquaintances, and were told that another settlement had been established on the Arkansas, thirty miles above. On July 1st, the expedition reached Bent's Fort (Fort William) where they were cordially welcomed by George Bent, and where Carson, Walker, and two others, being now at home, remained. This fort, founded in 1829, was one of the most important places in the West for many years. It was about 100 by 150 feet in dimensions, with walls of adobe about six feet thick and eighteen feet high, and was entered by a gateway in which were a pair of immense plank doors. At the north-west and south-east corners were bastions. Inside there were a corral for the animals and a division for the shops, dwellings, etc., the latter commanded by carronades in the bastions. All floors and roofs were of adobe, in Mexican and Puebloan fashion. At the time of Frémont's visit it was in full operation, employing from 80 to 100 men. Among other celebrities was Charlotte, a cook of African parentage, who declared she was "de onlee lady in de dam Injun country!" as Ruxton tells it.

On July 5, 1844, Frémont left the comfortable fort and headed indirectly for home, following a waggon-road down the Arkansas, and passing through a large band of Sioux and Cheyennes, who had been east to battle with Kiowas and Comanches. They had killed fifteen Delawares, incidentally, and at that time had lost several of their own party. Frémont had no trouble with them. "Dispersed over the

plain in scattered bodies of horsemen and family groups of women and children, with dog trains carrying baggage, and long lines of pack horses, their appearance was picturesque and imposing." The dogs were loaded by means of the *travois*, two long poles crossed at the dog's neck and allowed to trail behind on the ground, the load being laid on the sticks just back of the dog. This was the original primitive method of packing dogs when the Amerindian tribes had not yet secured the horse, the dog then being their sole beast of burden. Later they used horses in the same way. On the morning of the 6th, the caravan left the Arkansas River, going north-easterly across the plains for examination of that region, and on the 9th camped on the Smoky Hill Fork in latitude 38° 51′ 15″. Proceeding along the Smoky Hill on the 10th they were at latitude 38° 52′ 22″, on the 13th at 38° 45′ 57″, and next they reached a camp of Pawnees. They went to them expecting good treatment but got the reverse, although these Indians were now receiving annuities from the Government. Frémont went on fifteen miles to camp in latitude 38° 42′ 33″, and learned afterwards that the Pawnees would have attacked him but for the opposition of the Pawnee Loups. The last camp on the Smoky Hill was in 38° 43′ 32″, longitude, 98° 17′ 31″. The only person injured on this stretch of the way was Alexis Ayot who was accidentally shot in the leg. Otherwise they met with no disasters, and camped on the Santa Fé Trail, in latitude 38° 33′ 22″ whence they followed it in to "the little town of Kansas, on the banks of the Missouri River," the Kansas City of to-day.

They had been out fourteen months and not a man had been sick in all that time, which apparently is proof that too much to eat and too much comfort are not good for mankind. They would probably have had a different record at home. Selling off the stock, a steamboat was embarked on for St. Louis, where they arrived August 6, 1844, and where the party was disbanded. Little Pablo was taken into the family

of Senator Benton, where he exhibited "docility, intelligence, and amiability," though this promise was not maintained. He preferred this to being sent back to Mexico by the Mexican Minister. The Chinook, who had hung on so long, to see the whites, was taken to Washington, given several months at the "Columbia College," then sent to Philadelphia, and learned to read, write, and speak English, "with some fluency." And thus ended one of the most extensive, prolonged, and successful exploring expeditions ever undertaken by an American, and it should stand to the everlasting credit of Frémont.

CHAPTER XIII

WASHINGTON TO MONTEREY

Captain by Brevet—Washington Wants California—Mexico Moving for War—The Third Frémont Expedition—Captain Frémont in the Secrets—Off to Bent's Fort—Up the Arkansas—Over the Wasatch to Salt Lake—Across the Great Basin and the Sierra Nevada—Sutter's Fort Again—A Lost Party—Encounter with Horse-thief Indians—California's Unrest—Micheltorena Deposed—Frémont at Monterey.

IN St. Louis, all this long time, Mrs. Frémont had been waiting for the return of her husband. As he had been absent six months longer than he had planned to be, there was much anxiety among his family and friends, when weeks and months passed, after the last word was received from him on the Columbia in 1843, and still there was silence. With only a brief stop, he proceeded to Washington, where he immediately pushed the preparation of his report on his second expedition with the able assistance of his admirable wife. Three of his friends had died during his absence, Nicollet, Hassler, and Senator Linn.

The completed copy of the Report was handed in March 1, 1845. It created a sensation. Depicting, as it did, the vast region he had traversed, in colours so different from others, it astonished the Government, and, indeed, the whole country. The report of the first expedition was combined with it, and Congress ordered 10,000 copies to be printed at once for distribution. Publishers everywhere, at home and abroad, took it up, and numerous private editions were speedily put on the market. Some of these ran into many thousands of copies, surpassing the edition printed by the

government. The newspapers were full of accounts of the Lieutenant's doings, and he was praised in every quarter. He was the hero of the hour, as he well deserved to be. He had accomplished an extraordinary journey, passing successfully through many difficulties, and without friction with his men, all of whom seemed to adore him.

General Winfield Scott, then the head of the army, and personally unacquainted with Frémont, moved to bestow on him the double brevet of First Lieutenant and Captain, honours which he had abundantly earned, even though he had not passed through West Point. President Tyler, thereupon, made the appointment to Captain by brevet, "*to rank as such from the 31st day of July, 1844, for gallant and highly meritorious services in two expeditions commanded by himself: the first to the Rocky Mountains, which terminated October 17th, 1842: and the second beyond those mountains, which terminated July 31st, 1844.*"

In his *Memoirs*, Frémont remarks: "This brevet has the greater value for me because it is the only recognition for services rendered that I have received from my own government."[1]

Senator Benton did not need to insist on the court-martial which after the departure of the second expedition he had demanded to justify the howitzer incident. The memory of that petty mutiny appeared to be thoroughly smothered by the triumphant return of Frémont. Nothing succeeds like success, and a court-martial of the distinguished explorer at this time would have been disastrous for those ordering it on such slight grounds. Frémont had made a wonderful tour, through foreign territory, in the face of opposition and prohibition, and he had made a thrilling report that fascinated the whole civilised world.

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 418. Towards the end of his life Congress roused itself and appointed him Major-General in 1890, three months before his death, when he had reached the age of 77. This was four years after the above remark was printed.

The American government, thanks to the tenacity of the circle, now possessed a knowledge of Mexican territory which Mexico itself did not have. And why was our government so gratified with these results? Because it had been a foregone conclusion, for several years, that Texas would be annexed to the United States and that war would immediately follow, as Mexico had declared it would. California Alta from the Colorado to the Pacific as well as New Mexico, it was believed, would then surely fall to the Americans. The Administration was keeping close watch on the desired territory for it was certain to be ours if our flag went up promptly.

The very day that Frémont handed in his report, March 1, 1845, Congress by joint resolution admitted Texas, thus throwing down the gauntlet to Mexico. From that moment war was automatically begun, Mexico having declared such action to be a cause of war. Actual hostilities did not commence at once, but the conditions were such that they could not long be averted, and the reader must bear this in mind when judging the actions of Frémont in California at a later date. As to the intentions of our government if Polk's effort to purchase the country failed he knew much that no one in California knew.

Daniel Webster, then a Senator, though opposing the annexation of Texas and any war with Mexico, was profoundly interested in California, and held that the Bay of San Francisco would be "twenty times as valuable to us as all Texas." He invited Captain Frémont to dine with him, to talk over California, but even after this he continued in the belief that the harbours were all that was worth owning there. Polk, the new President, saw that the harbours could only be obtained with the land, and he endeavoured to buy the whole from Mexico but without success. George Bancroft, the historian, Secretary of the Navy, united with him in this effort with no definite result. The navy was notified to be on the alert and allow no other nation to get the ad-

vantage, and special instructions were sent to our Consul at Monterey, by Buchanan, Secretary of State. The document is diplomatically worded, and some of Frémont's severe critics point to it as an evidence of our lamb-like intentions towards Mexico's California possessions and condemn him as a usurper. Some of these critics apparently are determined to see no good whatever in Frémont or his doings, and they are so prejudiced against him that the value of their opinion is much impaired.

Buchanan says most amiably in the document referred to: "This government has no ambitious aspirations to gratify and no desire to extend our Federal system over more territory than we already possess, unless by the free and spontaneous wish of the independent people of adjoining territories," which is merely the polite language of the diplomat: it means little. Our flag had already once been run up over Mexican territory, Texas had been taken in with its absurd claim to Santa Fé, a city two and a half centuries old, and all the eastern part of New Mexico where it possessed, so far as I can judge, not the faintest right, and the United States was already planning to take the action, the move to the Rio Grande, which it soon did take, and which precipitated hostilities.[1] It is clear, therefore, that Buchanan's phrases were empty indeed, and to hold up his general instructions to a consul as a condemnation of Frémont's action when on the ground, is hardly sensible. And this is specially true when we remember that the long and difficult journey of investigation which we have just followed was authorised by our government, and directed through the territory of the very power Buchanan speaks of so tenderly, contrary to the wishes of that power. Though

[1] While this move did not take place till March, 1846, it was advocated by General Taylor in October, 1845, and no doubt had been discussed by Benton, Bancroft, Buchanan, and the President even before Frémont left Washington. That it would be followed by immediate war was certain; there was no alternative for Mexico.

Frémont then made the trip through Mexican territory apparently as an afterthought, it is hardly likely that this was actually the case, and the matter must have been understood beforehand by the circle and by high officials. The search for the Buenaventura River probably had a purpose other than mere exploration.

President Polk, recently installed (March, 1845), was determined to acquire California. The critical situation with Mexico prohibited further amicable negotiations towards that end; in fact the "war cloud on the horizon" was rapidly shaping itself for a storm. Bancroft, Buchanan, and Senator Dix, a member of the Senate Military Committee, came frequently to confer with Senator Benton, who was chairman of the Senate Military Committee. The whole situation was frequently and minutely discussed, and yet there are persons who appear to believe that Frémont, the son-in-law and confidant of Senator Benton, had no knowledge beyond that which any citizen might have, of the plans and intentions of the government. It is more than likely that he knew a great deal that he could not state, publicly or privately, even at a later period, in his own defence.

Secretary Buchanan brought confidential Spanish letters, to be read by Dix and Benton, who were versed in that language, while Buchanan did not know it, and feared to trust translations to uncertain persons. These meetings were held in Benton's library, and translations were made by Mrs. Frémont and her elder sister. Is it likely, then, that Captain Frémont, under these circumstances, did not receive much knowledge that he could not talk about, and which at a later period influenced his actions? Mexico was already mobilising troops on the frontier, preparatory to executing her threat of war in the event of the annexation of Texas and any endeavour, on the part of the United States, to occupy the territory beyond the Nueces, which Texas so unjustly claimed.

It is significant that, at this juncture, a third expedition

into Mexican territory was projected. "And in arranging this expedition," remarks Captain Frémont,

> the eventualities of war were taken into consideration . . . Mexico at war with the United States, would inevitably favour English protection for California. English citizens were claiming payment for loans and indemnity for losses. Our relations with England were already clouded, and in the event of war with Mexico, if not anticipated by us, an English fleet would certainly take possession of San Francisco Bay.[1]

The "possible political results" of the expedition were frequently discussed in high circles. "My private instructions were, if needed, to foil England by carrying the war now imminent with Mexico into its territory of California."[2] It is clear that Frémont did not start on this third expedition with his eyes shut, or with any lack of knowledge of our government's intentions or plans. It is also clear that there was more military design in that expedition than appeared on the surface. Secretary Bancroft approved it, as well as Senator Benton; they were friends of long standing, and no doubt with Frémont went over the ground many times.

California, to all the foremost officials in the Washington government, "stood out as the chief subject of the impending war," and they intended to secure it for the United States. California was about to fall to one or the other of the waiting nations, as it was certain Mexico could not hold it. "This was talked over fully during the time of preparation of the third expedition, and the contingencies anticipated and weighed. . . . For me no distinct course or definite instruction could be laid down, but the probabilities were made known to me, as well as what to do when they became facts.

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 423. It should be noted also that the United States had no land forces on the Pacific.

[2] "The Conquest of California," by John Charles Frémont. *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 919.

The distance was too great for timely communication; but failing this I was given discretion to act."[1] In judging the course of the Captain in the scenes to come, the reader should weigh well all these statements and all the related circumstances.

Captain Frémont left Washington for his third journey, accompanied only by Dodson, his faithful coloured man, and Chinook, who had now satisfied his ambition and was ready to return to his Oregon home. Little Pablo had been left at St. Louis to be educated, as before noted, but his character turned out to be bad and he was later not a credit to his country.[2] Mrs. Frémont, who had intended to go to St. Louis with the Captain, was detained by the illness of her mother.

Preuss had purchased a comfortable house in Washington and he remained there, his place as topographer being taken by Edward M. Kern, of Philadelphia, a man of equal integrity and intelligence. The funds provided for this expedition were larger than for the former ones, "and in view of uncertain conditions the force was suitably increased." It might be asked why, in view of these uncertain conditions, a *topographical* survey in a foreign country, about to engage in war, was deemed necessary, were it not evident that this was really no topographical expedition but only one of the lines of action which the desire to secure California dictated. Against the rag-tag soldiery of Mexico stationed in California, the sturdy band which Frémont was assembling would be a formidable antagonist. He purchased a dozen of the finest rifles to be had, with the plan to offer them as prizes for the best marksmanship; marksmanship being so important a part of topographical work!

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 423.

[2] Frémont states that Pablo, after some years, was reported to be the noted California bandit Joaquin. This was Joaquin Murieta who entered California in 1849, "a bright, keen, handsome youth of 18." He was robbed of his mining claim, and beaten, and his "brother" was wantonly hung. This started him off as a bandit. Pablo had no brother but the man hung may have been his chum and partner. It was a dramatic career.

Frémont's animals, which had been left on pasture, were found in excellent condition. Many of his old men joined him, among them Joseph Walker, Godey, and his favourite, Basil Lajeunesse, and Theodore Talbot. In addition were Lieutenants Abert and Peck of the Topographical Corps, and James McDowell, a nephew of Mrs. Benton. Besides these there were twelve Delaware Indians, specially selected.

The expedition arrived, on August 2, 1845, at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, previously described. Here a separate party was arranged under the command of Lieutenant Abert, assisted by Lieutenant Peck, to explore the country to the southward, "embracing the Canadian and other waters," in other words it was a further encroachment on Mexican territory. It is hardly necessary therefore to delude ourselves by calling this a topographical survey; it was nothing less than a military reconnaissance. The Abert party consisted of thirty-three well armed men, with Fitzpatrick as guide. McDowell also went with this division, which was not to remain out over the winter.

A messenger sent to Kit Carson, at his ranch on the Cimarron, brought not only him, but his partner Dick Owens, also an experienced frontiersman. "That Owens was a good man," remarks the Captain, "it is enough to say that he and Carson were friends." Of Carson, Godey, and Owens, Frémont always speaks in the very highest terms and declares they might have become marshals under Napoleon.

The Third Expedition, composed, after the departure of the Abert division, of sixty "experienced and self-reliant men, equal to any emergency likely to occur and willing to meet it," thoroughly equipped, was a soldierly affair, with little semblance to a topographical survey party. They started from Bent's Fort, August 16, 1845, and on the 20th were at the mouth of the *Fontaine qui Bouit*, now Pueblo. Here a portable transit instrument was set up and one of four base stations was established. "The longitude, 104°

42′ 41″, was determined by moon culminations and the latitude, 38° 15′ 18″, by sextant observations of Polaris and stars in the south."[1]

Proceeding up the Arkansas they camped on the 26th at the mouth of the "Great Canyon" now called the Royal Gorge, and the next morning left the river, passing "over a bench of the mountain, which the trappers believed to be the place where Pike was taken prisoner by the Mexicans." This was an error on the part of the trappers, as Pike was taken prisoner on the right, or west, side of the Rio Grande, five miles up the Rio Conejos, a good many miles south of this. The weather was fine and travelling a pleasure through the beautiful country, the same where Pike met with disaster in winter, and where Frémont himself was doomed to some sad days in the future.

Following up the Arkansas they arrived on September 2d in Mexican territory on the headwaters, latitude 39° 20′ 38″, longitude 106° 27′ 15″. Here they found a small herd of buffalo and secured plenty of meat; other game was also abundant. A few days after this Frémont was riding alone, and in pursuing a buffalo his pistol was accidentally discharged, sending the ball past his own head. He thought if he had been killed he might never have been found; but if Carson, Owens, and Godey were the woodsmen they were thought to be, they would have gone to the spot, on his trail, like bloodhounds. One of the Delawares got a fat cow from the same herd, which was the last buffalo they saw.

The night of September 4, 1845, they camped on Piney River, and on the 5th they camped again on the same stream in latitude 39° 39′ 12″, longitude 106° 44′ 21″. Here they caught a strange looking fish which had a hump on its back "rising straight up immediately behind the head" and from this peculiarity it was called buffalo fish. We caught the

[1] The instruments on this expedition consisted of a portable transit (telescope 26″ long) by Young of Philadelphia, a sextant by Troughton, a sextant by Gambey, and two pocket chronometers by Appleton.

same kind in Green River and called them humpbacks. As I remember them they uttered a squeal when killed, which struck us as being as singular as their shape.

From Piney River the party continued westerly to Grand River, and crossing that stream some miles above the mouth of Piney River, they struck the head of White River and kept down it to Green River, which was crossed at the mouth of the Uinta, a mile or two above the mouth of White River. They had followed, no doubt, the same Indian highway, a well defined trail, which with two companions I once tramped over on foot, going in the other direction. In 1861, Captain Berthoud laid out a road, from Denver to Salt Lake, which came down White River, over the same course, and crossed just above the mouth of the Uinta. This place evidently had been a regular crossing of Green River for a very long time. We found there on the west bank an old cottonwood tree, covered with names that had been cut in from time to time. There is no good crossing of Green River below this till one reaches Gunnison Valley, 150 miles, where the Spanish Trail, Gunnison, and other trails went over, and where the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway now crosses; about latitude 39°.

The bottom around the mouth of White River was grassy and level and when we were there in 1871 it was thick with antelope and deer. A more beautiful stretch of bottom would be hard to find. Frémont was now nearing his trail of 1844 coming east from Utah Lake, and continuing up the Uinta, he reached it, crossed it at about longitude 110° 15′ 00″, and went over to the head of the Timpanogos (Provo Creek) on October 2d, which he followed down to Utah Lake, reaching it October 10th. He camped on the shore at its outlet at the mouth of "Hugh's Creek," on October 12th. On the 13th he went on to Salt Lake, where he made his second general astronomical base, in latitude 40° 45′ 53″, longitude 112° 06′ 08″. Two weeks were occupied here in topographic work. Captain Frémont would

not now have described Utah Lake as "connecting with the Great Salt Lake, . . . but it is fresh water, while the other is not only salt, but a saturated solution of salt, and here is a problem which requires to be solved." He had also earlier spoken of Utah Lake as "the southern limb of the Great Salt Lake."[1] It was these statements which Brigham Young criticised, as before noted.

The Indians informed Frémont that, at the present low stage of the lake, he could ride across the shallows to the "large peninsular island" near the south-eastern shore and near the camp. With Carson and several others he rode out to it, the water "nowhere above the saddle-girths," and the floor of the lake "a sheet of salt resembling soft ice, into which the horses' feet sank to the fetlocks." The island had grass and water, and numerous antelope, some of which were killed for food. From this grateful circumstance the Captain gave the name "Antelope" to the island, which it still bears. The latitude of the summit peak was 40° 58′ 48″.

When the hunting party again arrived at their camp, they found there an old Ute who said all the antelope on the island belonged to him and that they must pay him for those they had killed. This claim seems to have struck the Captain as being something ridiculous, but nevertheless, "Pleased with his readiness," he gave him some presents in compensation. The old man was satisfied at this settlement of what Frémont calls "his imaginary claim." But the claim was not imaginary, in all probability. The white men of that day did not know that each tribal country was apportioned among its members with considerable exactness, and this island doubtless was this particular man's domain. He owned it just as much as if he had a recorded deed of it. In Arizona, we once named a valley "Kwagunt" because a Pai Ute of that name said the valley was his, that his father had given it to him, and as he was a generally truthful person we believed him. Many of the clashes between

[1] *Report*, p. 273–74; *Memoirs*, p. 388.

the whites and the Indians came from the refusal of the former to admit the Indian claims.

Several days in the middle of the month were rainy with snow on the peaks and down to within 2000 feet of the valley floor. On October 23d as they were moving to a new camp they saw an Indian drinking at a rivulet, which they were surprised to find salt. Indians used to eat salt occasionally as a white person might eat candy, and it is likely that this Indian was drinking the salt water with a relish. The last camp around the lake was near the south-western shore in latitude 40° 38′ 17″, longitude 113° 05′ 09″. As they looked west from any neighbouring mountain height the eye met, beyond the desert, only a succession of desolate ranges, "like looking edgewise along the teeth of a saw."

Frémont desired to strike across the unknown part of the Great Basin, unknown so far as any record went. Neither Carson nor Walker had any knowledge of this western desert according to Frémont, yet this is somewhat incomprehensible, for Walker in 1833 went west to the head of the Humboldt and followed it to its sink in the lake. With forty men of Bonneville's force, and others not connected with it, he had set out and they soon lost themselves in the desert now confronting Frémont. After much suffering they struck the head of Ogden's River (Humboldt), —so called after Peter Skene Ogden, who was the first white man recorded to visit it,—and followed it to the "sink," whence they crossed the Sierra, as before related, and went to Monterey. Walker was now a member of Frémont's party, and yet the Captain says none of his men knew anything about this region! The Indians said there was no water and that no one had been known to cross the plain beyond, showing the frequent inaccuracy of Indian information; not only Walker, but Ogden before him, had been across the region, as well as Jedediah Smith in 1827, and the Bartleson-Bidwell party in 1841.

This desert is flat for a long distance. It is dry and

bleached. Under the noonday sun the mirage plays fancifully across it like a will-o'-the-wisp. Now one sees the blue and rippling waters of a lake; the next moment perceives nothing but sand is there. Little bushes are drawn up to the height of forest trees and then are perceived floating aloft in the palpitating air with no foundation whatever. Nothing is what it seems to be except the dryness and the desiccating heat, and water becomes the only valuable thing in the world.

They saw far off a mountain peak which suggested fertility. Frémont decided to attempt to reach it. He succeeded in persuading an Indian to act as a guide. Carson and several others were to start out at night and if water were discovered at the mountain they were to set a signal smoke. Frémont, the next day, was to journey as far as possible and make a dry camp. Late that same day Frémont turned out across the barren floor, bare and smooth as if recently water had been standing upon it, a sage-bush here and there. As they marched on into the silent night, the guide became terrified, and Frémont paid him and let him depart. Near morning a camp was made, and before daybreak, Archambeau, guided by the signal fires kept burning, rode in with news of water. In the afternoon the whole party reached the spring, a little rill which lost itself in the desert. The mountain from whose cheerful slope the water came, Frémont named Pilot Peak, latitude 41° 00′ 28″, longitude 114° 11′ 09″. Later this peak became a landmark on the short cut to California known as the "Hastings Cut-off," laid out by Lansford W. Hastings.

Resting a day here to allow the animals to pick up after the strain of the desert, they took up their march again on November 1, 1845, winding their way westward through the short ranges, and camped at night at a spring in latitude 40° 43′ 29″, longitude 114° 26′ 22″, near the present town of Shafter, Nevada, on the line of the Nevada Northern Railway.

"The winter was now approaching," Frémont says, "and I had good reason to know what the snow would be in the Great Sierra. It was imprudent to linger long in the examination of the Great Basin." Here he decided to divide his party to gain time and information. But why this haste to get to the coast in California? The Great Basin was the least explored region: why, therefore, if this were purely an exploration party, mapping a foreign country, did not the Captain remain and study out these problems? The reason was apparently, as before stated, that this was no topographical survey party, but was a military reconnaissance by a body of well-equipped soldiers, true shots and fearless. They were going to California with a military purpose. The Mexicans were concentrating their troops on the frontier before Frémont left Washington. It was only a question of a few weeks when the war would begin. The American army was to advance *beyond the Nueces*, into territory the Mexicans had never, for a moment, admitted was not still their own, and the result of such a move needed no interpreter. Frémont knew these things of course. It was imperative for him to reach California with his sixty men as speedily as possible, for they might be needed there any day. This was undoubtedly the reason for the rapidity of his advance, halting only by the way long enough to determine conditions, passes, watering places, etc., and keep his men and stock in good order.

On the evening of the 8th of November they camped on a small creek to which Frémont gave the name of "Crane," after one of his Delaware Indians; "one of the men he liked to have near him." Crane's Branch flowed into another stream "that was one of two forks forming a river to which I gave the name of Humboldt."[1] In this he performed an act of injustice to one of his predecessors in the region, Peter Skene Ogden, the first white man on record to see and

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 434. The first application of the name in the geography of North America.

describe this river. It was proper enough to honour Humboldt, but it should not have been done at the expense of Ogden, who by every rule of exploration and map-making was entitled to this distinction, and whose name already was attached to this river. Ogden was a Hudson Bay Company man, and, in the midst of all the jealousies and international prejudices, he performed an act of mercy at the time of the Whitman massacre which should endear him to all Americans.[1] Frémont, at this time, also named a nearby range of mountains, or as he calls it "a mountain," after Humboldt.

The party was here divided.[2] The main body under Talbot, with Edward M. Kern as topographer, was to keep on down and survey the Humboldt to the "sink," with Joseph Walker as guide, and thence go on to the lake at the foot of the Sierra to which Frémont gives the name of Walker. This is somewhat puzzling, as he did not mention the lake now called Walker Lake on his former expedition. Probably Walker told him about the lake and indicated its position. "I had engaged Mr. Walker," the Captain says, "for guide in this part of the region to be explored, with which, and the southern part of the 'California Mountains' he was well acquainted." The two divisions were to meet at Walker Lake, which is very near the trail of 1844.

For his own party, Frémont selected ten men, including some of the Delawares, and set off somewhat southerly, pushing on as rapidly as the nature of the country would allow. Good Indian trails were found everywhere, and they always led to water which was invariably on some mountain slope in a ravine. It was in this region that Walker's men

[1] He induced the Indians to deliver the remaining families and took them to safety. See *Peter Skene Ogden—Fur Trader*, by T. C. Elliott.

[2] See *Report of Explorations across the Great Basin of Utah in 1859*, by Capt. J. H. Simpson, Washington, 1876, Appendix Q: The Journal of Mr. Edward M. Kern of his Explorations . . . under Capt. John C. Frémont, in 1845. Kern states that the division was made at Whitton Spring. He met with no serious difficulty.

in 1833 had so cruelly shot the Indians they met, killing twenty-nine in one place, and it is not remarkable that a solitary Indian they surprised beside his camp-fire thought his end had come. All he could do was to offer the strangers some of the squirrels he was boiling, but the man was left in peace. The Delawares lingered till Frémont whipped them up as he feared they had murderous designs. In spite of his care they carried off the Indian's bow and arrows, which the Captain compelled them to take back. A little farther on at one of the springs they had a visitation from a woman fully eighty years old, appearing out of the darkness like a wraith before the bright fire. She had supposed it a camp of her own people. Some antelope meat was given to her and she vanished.

From near Shafter they went westward to Whitton Spring in latitude 40° 42′ 13″, longitude 114° 55′45″, where they camped November 3d. On November 8th, as noted above, they were on Crane's Branch of the South Fork of the Humboldt in latitude 40° 17′ 16″ and longitude 115° 46′ 00″. This was not far from a place now called Huntington, and they passed just south of Franklin Lake on the way. The next stretch was south to Basil's Creek in latitude 39° 11′ 57″ and longitude 117° 14′ 12″, not a great distance from the present town of Cold Creek. Here the course struck westerly and southerly to a camp on the night of November 16th, in latitude 38° 49′ 21″ and longitude 117° 16′ 52″, at some boiling springs in what is now the Big Smoky Valley. Southerly they proceeded down this valley, being one of the numerous longitudinal valleys between the mountain ranges referred to in Chapter II., to near San Antonio, or exactly speaking to latitude 38° 33′ 17″ and longitude 117° 24′ 29″, on what they called Moore's Creek, evidently the stream now known as the Peavine.

Turning almost due west from this point, camp was made on the night of November 21, 1845, at Sagundai's Spring in latitude 38° 23′ 11″, longitude 118° 24′ 51″. This

was fifteen or twenty miles south-east of the present town of Hawthorne, Nevada. It will be noted that progress is much easier across these dry reaches than it was on the former expedition, when the desert character troubled and appalled the whole party. Experience had taught the Captain much, though he states that here there was abundance of game and fine grass, and wood.[1] They were now approaching Walker Lake and turning to the north-west they reached its south end, not far from Hawthorne, and very near Thorne, in latitude 38° 35′ 11″, longitude 118° 32′ 19″, at a point Frémont describes as the "eastern shore of Walker Lake." This place was reached November 24, 1845, and here they were to wait for the other branch of the expedition to arrive via Humboldt River and Lake, which it did in three days. The weather had been generally not cold, with a snow-storm continuing through several nights with fair days.

The sight of the grim wall of the Sierra Nevada once more looming before him reminded the Captain of the hard experiences of his winter crossing on the former expedition. With the prospect of heavy snows, he concluded not to risk his whole slow-moving party in an attempt to cross here, but to divide it again and send the slow, main body, under Talbot, southward along the eastern foot of the range to pass by the south into the San Joaquin Valley, Walker being once more sent as guide. The meeting of the two divisions was to take place "at a little lake in the valley of a river called the Lake Fork [King's River] of the Tulare Lake. . . . With a selected party of fifteen" the Captain was "to attempt the crossing of the mountain in order to get through to Sutter's Fort before the snow began to fall." There he expected to obtain all necessary supplies.

He now proceeded north along the east side of Walker Lake, where the Nevada and California Railway runs, and on November 26th camped on Walker River three miles above its mouth, or near the present town of Schurz,

[1] "The Conquest of California," *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., p. 920.

Nevada, and on the 29th, at the most northern bend of the same stream in latitude 39° 09′ 05″ and longitude 119° 05′ 23′. He was on familiar ground, being near his trail of last year, and on the 1st of December, 1845, he came to the stream which he had previously named Salmon Trout River, now the Truckee, up which was the route of the emigrant trail of '49. This was the path by which the Stevens-Townsend party of 1844 had entered California, the first to take waggons across the Sierra.

Frémont camped above the "lower cañon," a few miles above Wadsworth, Nevada, in latitude 39° 33′ 48″. He was now also on the future line of the Central Pacific Railway. Continuing up the Truckee, the 4th of December found the party encamped "at its head on the east side of the pass in the Sierra Nevada," in latitude 39° 17′ 12″, longitude 120° 15′ 20″. As the Truckee heads in Lake Tahoe, it is plain that the Captain was somewhere else than at its head. Plotting his observations on the Truckee sheet of the U. S. G. S. map his position is found to be on Cold Creek about two miles south of the south shore of Donner Lake, inside the long loop which the Central Pacific Railway makes to surmount the range and arrive at Donner Pass. Frémont does not mention this lake, afterward named for the unfortunate Donner party already referred to.

Early the next morning they climbed "the rocky ridge which faces the eastern side, and at sunrise were on the crest of the divide, 7200 feet above the sea [Donner Pass is 7056]. . . . The emigrant road now passes here, following down a fork of Bear River, which leads from the pass into the Sacramento Valley." Thus, we see, there was a road that way even then—the one the Stevens-Townsend party had followed, but it could have been little more than the ruts left by the passage of their waggons. The night before Frémont had watched the pass anxiously, prepared to make an immediate crossing if snow began; but they were favoured with fair weather. There

was no snow in the pass and the overpowering conditions which destroyed the Donner party's efforts later were entirely absent. Finding the "emigrant road" rough, Frémont turned to the south, and camped in a mountain meadow.[1] The following day they continued through a superb forest of tall trees, "of great height and uncommon size. The tall red columns standing closely on the clear ground, the filtered, flickering sunshine from their summits overhead, gave the dim religious light of cathedral isles, opening out on every side, one after the other, as we advanced." On December 6th the camp was in latitude 39° 11′ 06″, "on an affluent of the North Fork of the *Rio de los Americanos*," with a longitude of 120° 44′ 24″. Rapidly descending they soon reached a country of oaks where some of the large sweet acorns resembled Italian chestnuts in taste. On the 7th they were on "Martin's" Fork, latitude 39° 04′ 11″ and longitude 121° 07′ 48″, and the next night camped in latitude 38° 53′ 05″, longitude 121° 08′ 49″, on a stream Frémont named Hamilton Creek, at an elevation above the sea of only 500 feet. The temperature was mild and the vegetation that of early spring.

"The oak belt of the mountain is the favourite range of Indians," the Captain says.

I found many small villages scattered through it. They select places near the streams where there are large boulders of granite rock, that show everywhere holes which they had used for mortars in which to pound the acorns. These are always pretty spots. The clean, smooth granite rocks standing out from the green of the fresh grass over which the great oaks throw their shade, and the clear running water, are pleasant to eye and ear.

[1] Doubtless he found a trail leading that way. It was about here, apparently, that Jedediah Smith came over the Sierra from the American River —so named after he had camped on it—on his way east in 1827. Bidwell states that Frémont followed substantially what was later the emigrant road.

Captain John A. Sutter

(Johann August Sutter)

1803–1880. One of the most conspicuous figures of California Alta in the 40's

Print Collection, New York Library

The whole party greatly enjoyed this radical change from the dry journey across the Great Basin.

On the 9th of December they were on the American opposite "Grimes' House" or Ranch, in latitude 38° 34′ 18″, longitude 121° 19′ 26″, very near Sutter's Fort, to which Frémont proceeded. "Captain Sutter," he says,

> received me with the same friendly hospitality which had been so delightful to us the year before. I found that our previous visit had created some excitement among the Mexican authorities. But to their inquiries he had explained that I had been engaged in a geographical survey of the interior, and had been driven to force my way through the snow of the mountains simply to obtain a refuge and food where I knew it could be had at his place, which was by common report known to me.[1]

"Nearly everybody who came to California," says John Bidwell,

> made it a point to reach Sutter's Fort. Sutter was one of the most liberal and hospitable of men. Everybody was welcome—one man or a hundred, it was all the same. He had peculiar traits: his necessities compelled him to take all he could buy, and he paid all he could pay; but he failed to keep up with his payments. And so he soon found himself immensely—almost hopelessly—involved in debt. His debt to the Russians amounted at first to something near one hundred thousand dollars. Interest increased apace. He had agreed to pay in wheat, but his crops failed. . . . Every year found him worse and worse off; but it was partly his own fault. He employed men—not because he always needed and could profitably employ them, but because in the kindness of his heart it simply became a habit to employ everybody who wanted employment. As long as he had anything he trusted anyone with everything he wanted—responsible or otherwise, acquaintances and strangers alike.[2]

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 441.

[2] "Life in California before the Gold Discovery," by John Bidwell, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., p. 169.

This unique establishment was, more or less, under military discipline. Cannon pointed in every direction through the walls and bastions, and the Indian soldiers, drilled by a white officer, marched to fife and drum, while regular bells called the large number of men to and from their occupations.[1] Probably never before or since, within the limits of what is now the United States, was there ever such an establishment, or for that matter, such a generous, helpful, big-minded "Governor." But to-day, his chief reward for all this is sneers and gibes of writers who never knew an hour of real frontier life.

Captain Frémont states that Captain Sutter received him with friendly hospitality. John Bidwell, who was in charge of the Sutter Fort at the time, Sutter being absent at the Bay of San Francisco, has this to say:

Frémont camped on the American River about three miles above the fort. The first notice of his return to California was his sudden appearance, with Kit Carson, at the fort. He at once made known to me his wants, namely, sixteen mules, six pack-saddles, some flour and other provisions, and the use of a blacksmith's shop to shoe the mules, to enable him to go in haste to meet the others of his party. I told him precisely what could, and could not be furnished—that we had no mules, but could let him have horses, and could make the pack-saddles; that he could have the use of a blacksmith's shop, but we were entirely out of coal. He became reticent, and, saying something in a low tone to Kit Carson, rose and left without saying good-day, and returned to his camp. As they mounted their horses to leave, Frémont was heard to say that I was unwilling to accommodate him, which greatly pained me; for, of course, we were always glad of the arrival of Americans, and especially of one in authority. Besides, I knew that Captain Sutter would do anything in his power for Frémont. So I took with me Dr. Gildea, a recent arrival from St. Louis, across the plains, and hastened to Frémont's camp and told him what had been reported to me. He stated in

[1] Bidwell says that when he arrived at Sutter's Fort, Jan. 1, 1842, there was no fort as yet, only a station.

a very formal manner, that he was the officer of one government and Sutter the officer of another; that difficulties existed between those governments; and, hence, his inference that I, representing Sutter, was not willing to accommodate him. He reminded me that on his first arrival here, in 1844, Sutter had sent out and in half an hour had brought him all the mules he wanted.[1]

On the other occasion, it seems Lassen had arrived with a hundred mules, and Sutter had bought from him what Frémont needed. When Sutter returned, a few days later, he was, of course, not able to furnish any more than his agent Bidwell. Thereupon, Frémont went down "to the bay" to get the desired supplies but was not successful. At this time, according to Bidwell, he paid a visit to the American Consul at Monterey, Thomas O. Larkin.[2] Returning to New Helvetia, he started on the 14th of December (according to the *Memoirs*) and went up the San Joaquin Valley on very much the same course as last year, and on the 19th of December was on the Mariposa River, or rather on its headwaters, and there he came upon many Indian trails freshly travelled by bands of horses. Numerous horse bones lying about indicated that the "Horse-thief Indians" were nearby, and four men, including two Delawares, were sent ahead as scouts. Presently firing was heard. Frémont hastened forward with the rest of his men and found the advance guard almost surrounded by not less than a hundred hostile Indians. A sharp encounter followed. Dick Owens shot one of the foremost Indians, and in the temporary halt, the Frémont party fell back to a point where four men had been left with the pack-train. The Indians followed closely with threats, declaring the next day would see the whites annihilated. Many of them spoke Spanish well, having been Mission Indians.

[1] "Frémont in the Conquest of California," by John Bidwell, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., p. 518.

[2] Bidwell seems to be in error as to the time of this visit. Frémont says it was after his trip south in search of his other division.

That night the sixteen men of the Frémont party were vigilant but nothing more than a shout now and then indicated the presence of Indians in the neighbourhood. One of the Delawares fired at a moving object, but there was no other shot, and in the morning a good retreat was made down to the open country. Here an Indian riding towards the plain was intercepted and killed by Maxwell, the Indian being armed only with a bow and arrows. Frémont reached the spot too late to save the Indian's life. Maxwell thought this Indian was intending to incite against them another band, but this was pure surmise and the killing of the man seems to have been without reason. The original trouble with the band of Chauchiles, as Frémont called them, probably arose from their supposing the four advance men were intending to attack them for horse stealing. Perhaps a little explanation would have avoided the conflict.

This was the territory afterwards comprised in Frémont's famous "Mariposa Grant" and he mentions this difficulty as a forerunner of his future unfortunate contests over ownership of the claim, but these contests were largely the result of his own action, and of the way in which the lines of the grant were drawn.

Through a misunderstanding the other party under Talbot was not discovered anywhere on the Lake Fork (King's River) and after a good deal of beating about amidst snow-storms and roaring chasms, the party returned to Sutter's Fort, with the belief that the other division had travelled more slowly than had been counted on; but they, in fact, were waiting elsewhere. From Sutter, who was a Mexican official, passports were obtained to Monterey, and on the way Frémont stopped at Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and met the American Consul, Leidesdorff, and Captain Hinckley, the former accompanying him to Monterey.

In the autumn of the year before, 1844, José Castro and the ex-Governor Alvarado incited an insurrection against Governor Micheltorena. On November 22d Micheltorena

proceeded from his quarters at Monterey against these rebels and met them near San José. He had 150, and the opposing leaders 200 men. One of the causes of the trouble was the lawlessness of the "soldiers" of Micheltorena, and another, alleged, was his friendliness towards Americans. John Bidwell declares the latter charge without foundation—that Micheltorena was merely impartial. "He was a fair-minded man," says Bidwell,

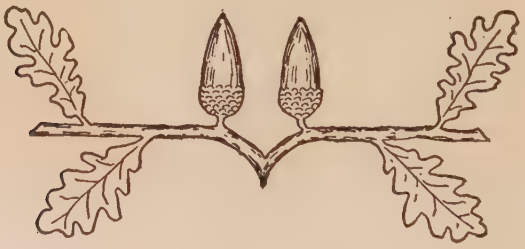
> and an intelligent and good governor, and wished to develop the country. . . . The real cause . . . was that the native chiefs had become hungry to get hold of the revenues. The feeling against Americans was easily aroused and became their main excuse. The English and French influence, so far as felt, evidently leaned towards the side of the Californians. It was not open but it was felt, and not a few expressed the hope that England, or France, would some day seize and hold California. . . . In October [1844] Sutter went from Sacramento [New Helvetia] to Monterey, the capital, to see the governor, Micheltorena. I went with him. On our way thither, we heard at San José the first mutterings of the insurrection.[1]

They told the Governor of the prospects and immediately Sutter hastened back to his fort, by water, while Bidwell started to return by land. The insurgents stole all the government horses, leaving Micheltorena and his troops on foot. After a parley at San José, a truce was patched up, but, as this insurrection was merely a part of the general unrest and dissatisfaction existing throughout the country, the truce was merely temporary. Monterey and Los Angeles were both endeavouring to be the capital, and in every direction there was antagonism, and universal dissatisfaction with conditions. Bidwell, returning to Monterey, met Micheltorena. The Governor desired him "to beg the Americans to be loyal to Mexico; to assure them that he was their

[1] "Life in California before the Gold Discovery," by John Bidwell, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., pp. 178, 179.

friend, and in due time would give them all the lands to which they were entitled." Shortly after Bidwell fell in with the two insurgent leaders, who also "protested their friendship" for the Americans and sent a request to Sutter to support them. "On my arrival at the fort," says Bidwell, "the situation was fully considered, and all, with a single exception, concluded to support Micheltorena." A man named Gutierrez was sent twice with loyal despatches to Micheltorena. The second time he was intercepted by the insurgents and unceremoniously hanged to a tree. Bidwell had been particularly interested in this man because Gutierrez had reported to him finding gold on Bear River in the spring of 1844, and they had planned to investigate and develop this find. Now the matter was ended, and the great gold find for a time was postponed.

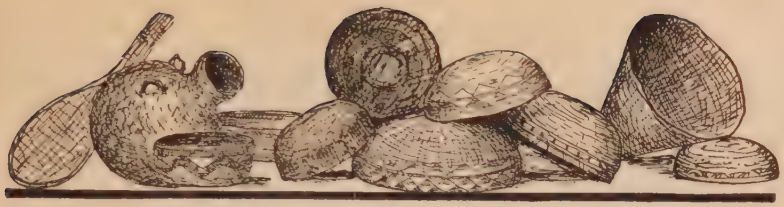
In January of this year, 1845, Sutter, with one hundred armed Indians and a like number of riflemen under John Gantt, and the former revolutionist, Isaac Graham, joined Micheltorena, whose agreement with the opposition meanwhile had been cancelled. But Micheltorena was soon deposed by the California Assembly at Los Angeles, and Pio Pico made Governor in his stead. José Castro was made Commandante General, installed at Monterey. And this was the situation when Frémont made his visit to Monterey, in January, 1846.



Mission of San Carlos, Monterey, 1794

The original old church is seen on the left. Just beyond is the beginning of the "new" church (July 7, 1793) which was completed September 14, 1797. Dwellings of neophytes are on the right of the corral and hill beyond.

and this drawing is ascribed to him. The new church went to ruin but in



CHAPTER XIV

THE RECONNAISSANCE TO THE NORTH

A Visit to the Commandante General—The Frémont Parties again United—Permission to Stay Revoked—Frémont's Defiance—At Lassen's Ranch—Naming Lake Rhett—A Messenger from Washington—New Instructions—A Fatal Night—Basil's Last Sleep, and Crane's and Denny's—Vengeance and Vengeance—Back to the Sacramento Valley—End of Exploration Work.

THE troubled condition of California affairs, the division between the north and south portions of the country, the imminence of something going to happen in the way of separation of California from Mexico, the certainty of a war beginning at any moment between Mexico and the United States, all placed Captain Frémont in a position requiring caution and yet of being ready to act rapidly in case of necessity. His attitude towards Bidwell, when he supposed that gentleman (as Sutter's agent) was withholding supplies from him, showed that he did not trust Mexican officials in the slightest degree, and on their part he was regarded with suspicion.

At Monterey where he arrived in company with Leidesdorff on January 26, 1846, he called at once on the American Consul, Larkin[1] and with him proceeded to make official visits. Don Pio Pico, the governor, was absent, but he met the prefect, the alcalde, ex-Governor Alvarado, and the Commanding General, Don José Castro. He informed these

[1] Thomas O. Larkin was United States Consul from April 2, 1844. He was made "confidential agent" in 1845. He had amassed a fortune in the country and Bryant remarks: "He will probably be the first American millionaire of California." He was a Bostonian.

officers that he was engaged in a topographical survey in the interests of science and commerce, and that the men composing his party were citizens not soldiers, but he did not say anything about his having drilled them in exact marksmanship all the way out. He asked permission to operate in the country. According to Bidwell the special permission asked was to winter in the San Joaquin Valley, away from the settlements, and to extend explorations in the spring as far south as the Colorado River. Castro gave him the necessary permission.

Meanwhile Carson and Owens had been sent to find Talbot and they finally met Walker and were taken to Talbot's camp on the Cosumne River. Through the misunderstanding, Talbot had waited on Kern River instead of on the Rio Reyes, now King's River. Walker made the mistake as he did not know about the Reyes River. Kern says: "The mistake Walker made in the name of the river on which we had camped to wait for Captain Frémont was the cause of his failure to make a junction with us, as had been pre-arranged at Walker's Lake." Finding that Frémont did not arrive Talbot came on down into the San Joaquin Valley and sent Walker to search for the Captain with the result that he met Carson and Owens as stated. The route pursued by the main body had been an easy one and all were in good health. They had come over the real Walker Pass at the head of what Frémont now named Kern River; and a fine lake which they had passed on the east side of the Sierra he named after Dick Owens.

The whole party of sixty-two good marksmen, being again united, Frémont chose a vacant ranch, belonging to a Mr. Fisher, in latitude 37° 13′ 32″, longitude 121° 39′ 08″, as a camp for refitting and recuperation. It was only a few miles from Mt. Hamilton where the Lick Observatory was afterwards established, and not very far from the town of San José. At this camp they received many visits from native Californians and everything was extremely friendly.

Early Monterey, California
From Meyer's *Universum*

Here they rested till February 22d, when the expedition started on its way. Instead of taking a south or south-east direction, however, as Castro expected him to do, Frémont travelled west and south-west into the settled country, and on February 25th "descended to the coast near the north-western point of Monterey Bay," coming into a cold south-east storm. After several days of this the weather became fine again and the march was resumed, March 1, 1846, from a camp in latitude 36° 58′ 43″, longitude 121° 48′ 51″ and on the 3d they camped at Hartnell's Ranch, twenty-five miles from the town of Monterey, then possessing a population of about five hundred people.

"The town of Monterey," says Lieutenant Wise, U. S. N., who visited it about this time, "if it could be dignified by the title, we found a mean, irregular collection of mud huts, and long low, adobie dwellings, strewn promiscuously over an easy slope, down to the water's edge."[1]

For some time there had been considerable agitation of the idea of expelling all the Americans from the country. As foreigners they were disqualified from holding land, and it would be necessary for them to become Mexican citizens or abandon their property. The year before in July the Governor had been instructed to prevent the coming of American settlers and much alarm began to develop among those who had already permanently fixed themselves in the country, and who had bought and paid for land under the impression that it was legal. Most of these settlers were north of San Francisco Bay, and they began seriously to consider the feasibility of organising to oppose the Mexican government and its decrees, which appeared to them entirely unjust. In fact the spirit of opposition and independence became very strong; it was no new spirit in California. A renewed order to Castro, and his alarm at the near presence of Captain Frémont and his powerful troop of hardy sharp-

[1] *Los Gringos*, by Lieutenant Wise, U. S. N., New York, 1849, p. 47.

shooters, caused the Commandante General to proceed to immediate action.[1]

The afternoon of March 5, 1846, therefore, was marked by the "sudden appearance" at the Frémont camp, of a cavalry officer, of the Mexican forces, and two men. This was Lieutenant Chavez with "peremptory letters from the general and prefect, ordering" Frémont out of the country. A threat of force was added if he did not obey immediately. Frémont was angered by the order and the threat, though he had no right to be. He was an intruder on Californian soil with a thoroughly equipped military company, at least three times larger and more powerful than was called for by his alleged occupation, each man bearing from three to six guns, rifles, and pistols.[2] No permission had been granted by the Mexican government for this expedition, or any other expedition of Americans, to survey or operate in any way in Alta California or New Mexico. In fact any such intrusion had been repeatedly prohibited, and Mexico had been repeatedly ignored. Captain Frémont, therefore, was a foreign officer with no rights in this country, having come without any "by your leave," till he arrived here and obtained the local permission referred to, which, as we see, was contrary to orders that arrived about the same time, and the permission was consequently revoked.

The proper thing, under the circumstances, would have been for him to comply with the order, as gracefully as possible, if he were bent merely on carrying on topographical work; but instead of this submissive course, he told the emissary to inform General Castro that he "peremptorily

[1] "After granting me permission to refresh my party . . . General Castro had received by the *Hannah* from the home government positive orders to drive me from the territory." *Memoirs*, p. 461. Larkin in a letter dated March 9, 1846, says: "General Castro says he has just received by the 'Hannah' direct and specific orders not to allow Captain Frémont to enter California." —*Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 922. *Memoirs*, p. 462, gives a slightly different version.

[2] Larkin letter, p. 464, *Memoirs*.

refused" to act on the order "insulting to his government and himself." There seems to be no excuse for this high-handed opposition. But Frémont had a very strong force, as forces went in California at that moment, and he knew that Castro would not be likely to meet it. American marksmanship was well respected. His men were also angered by the order, as naturally they would be, and they stood by their chief.

Instead of leaving the country, Frémont moved a few miles to Gavilan Peak where he defiantly placed his camp in a commanding position on a small wooded flat at the summit. Here there were wood, water, and grass and a view of the surrounding country, by which the movements of the Mexicans could be observed. A rough, strong fort of logs was speedily constructed. A tall sapling was cut and stripped of its branches to make a flag pole, and from its top the American flag was unfurled amid the cheers of the men. They could see with glasses the Mission of San Juan where General Castro was gathering his troops. On the afternoon of the second day, a body of cavalry was discovered approaching, and with about forty men Frémont stole down the slope to where he could ambush them. Fortunately they retired before the place was reached.

Toward evening of the third day the pole bearing the flag fell down. During this time the Captain had had time to ponder on the situation and perceived the error of his course. "Thinking I had remained as long as the occasion required, I took advantage of the accident to say to the men that this was an indication for us to move camp, and accordingly I gave the order to prepare to move."[1]

Castro reported that he had driven out the American *bandoleros*, or highwaymen; that they were cowards and had run. Larkin states that Frémont "received verbal applications from English and Americans to join his party and could have mustered as many men as the natives."[2] On

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 460. [2] *Ib.*, 468.

the morning of March 11th, after the Frémont party had gone, an Englishman named Gilroy, arrived at the camp from Castro, to offer an arrangement of the trouble, which Frémont later ascertained was a proposition to join forces *against the Governor* Don Pio Pico![1] This is an example of the complete lack of cohesion at the time in Californian affairs. The country was without organisation, without central power, and almost without any real connection with Mexico.

Proceeding northward by short stages the evening of March 14th found the expedition camped on the Tuolumne River, in latitude 37° 25′ 53″ and longitude 120° 35′ 55″. Castro had not ordered Frémont to go north but simply to leave the country, and probably would have been quite as well satisfied if the Captain had carried out his original plan of exploring the lower Colorado. He certainly would have been more out of the way there than in the north. But Frémont evidently did not care to get too far from the Bay of San Francisco, where any day now might bring news of the prospective war. Although travelling slowly, they were on Feather River, by the 26th of April, at the mouth of the Yuba where there was a large village of Indians, after whom, Frémont says, the river was named. The Indians helped them across with canoes and small rafts. These Indians were the Yupu, or Yuba, of the Maidu stock, and the village stood about where Yuba City is now located. The junction of Feather River and the Yuba, Frémont gives

[1] Castro and Pio Pico, the former presenting the military side, the latter the civil, of the government of California, were at swords' points over the definition of their respective authorities and of the proper line of action. Moreover, Castro stood for the north and Pio Pico for the south. June 8, 1846, Castro proclaimed martial law and on June 16th, Pio Pico with a military force started for Monterey to compel Castro's submission to his authority. Action by the Americans at this moment changed the whole complexion of affairs. The reader will perceive that the flimsy government of California was not in a position to make much of a stand against the Americans, especially with a large element of the population, native and foreign, openly expressing their pro-Americanism.

Mount Shasta, California

From the north, near Sheep Rock. Altitude, 14,380 feet

Photograph by United States Geological Survey

as latitude 39° 07′ 45″, longitude 121° 30′ 21″. A German named Cordua had a fine cattle ranch not far up the Yuba from this place; and farther up Feather River the blacksmith Neal, who had remained behind at Sutter's Fort from the other Frémont expedition, was encountered occupying a good ranch with plenty of stock. Continuing they halted on March 29th on Pine Creek in latitude 39° 52′ 58″, longitude 121° 52′ 58″. The next day another fine ranch was met with on Deer Creek. This one belonged to a man whose name, in "Lassen" Peak (10,577 feet), is on the map of California, Lassen being another German. His ranch was in latitude 39° 56′ 04″, longitude 121° 56′ 44″ at an elevation of 500 feet above the sea.[1] Resting six days here, not being in much of a hurry, apparently, to get out of California, Frémont went leisurely on, up the valley of the Sacramento and on April 6th he saw the snowy heights of "Shastl" (Shasta) on the northern horizon.[2] Frémont was now following practically the route of Jedediah Smith of 1827–28, and continued on it to about the mouth of Pitt River.

Heading for Shasta, with huge mountain ranges rising on both sides of the valley into the snows, Frémont named one peak of the Coast Range, Mount Linn (8604 feet), in honour of that departed Senator. At a stream called Red Bank Creek, the lower valley of the Sacramento was left behind, and the expedition continued across a more broken country up the valley of Pitt River. Frémont makes a special note of seeing again the manzanita which before had struck him as a singular plant. It is one of those strikingly individual shrubs, or bushes, sometimes growing at least ten feet high, which challenge immediate attention. Its reddish, smooth bark, its waxy leaves and picturesquely rugged

[1] In Frémont's text the latitude is given 39° 57′ 04″, longitude 120° 56′ 44″ but in the final table the figures are as stated above.

[2] The name Shasta is from the Shasta Indians (Shastan family) whose range was in northern California to south-western Oregon. There are two divisions, the Shasta and the Palaihnihan, formerly considered separate stocks. The altitude of the mountain is 14,380 feet.

appearance, give it a distinction that even the most casual traveller must notice. In some parts of the South-west the Indians use its leaves for smoking, like tobacco.

To the right, or east, of Shasta was what Frémont called the upper Sacramento Valley (valley of Pitt River), a river which sometimes, in very wet seasons, receives water from Goose Lake, which lake is otherwise classed in the Great Basin drainage. Returning now to the southward the party arrived on April 11th once more at Lassen's where the Captain took time to set up his heavy transit and observed the longitude with exactness, obtaining the figures given above. The day the expedition again left Lassen's comfortable ranch was an eventful one for California, though no one there knew it at the time. It was the 24th of April, 1846, the day on which the first clash of arms occurred between the Mexicans and the Americans in the Rio Grande region, when a party of American dragoons was destroyed by the Mexican forces.

The annexation of Texas had carried with it, by agreement, that republic's unwarranted claim to the land as far as the Rio Grande, including the ancient Spanish city of Santa Fé, and other old towns, to which Texas had no more just claim than to the city of Chihuahua, or the City of Mexico, itself. The pitiable failure of the Texans to bring Santa Fé, and the contiguous country east of the Rio Grande, under the Texan flag has been related in a previous chapter. Now, however, the might of the United States was to be flung against a weak government to accomplish this same purpose. Mexican territory extending north across the American path of Empire was a barrier to our "manifest destiny" not to be tolerated, and this is the whole story. General Taylor was ordered to advance and as early as August, 1845, he took up a position on the west bank of the Nueces, in what was Mexican territory.

General Taylor was ordered to proceed to the Rio Grande which he did, entrenching at Fort Brown, now

Brownsville, opposite Matamoras. President Polk proclaimed that Mexico had "invaded our territory and shed American blood on American soil," and war was forthwith declared! Few countries can surpass this action in audacity. It was called *Mexico's* making war on the United States!

Meanwhile, without knowing positively of these occurrences, but naturally fully expecting them from his intimate knowledge of the inside plans of the controlling men at Washington, and from the situation when he left Washington, Captain Frémont proceeded slowly northward, evidently reluctant to move far from the Bay of San Francisco. Frémont's intention, as now expressed, was to connect with the line of his 1843 journey in the Klamath region. He had forgotten, at least temporarily, about his previous plan to explore the lower Colorado. On the 26th of April the party passed up Brant's fork of the Sacramento and camped in latitude 40° 38′ 58″. The Captain always notices the flowers and here again he enthuses over the California poppy, but he soon had something else to occupy his attention. He had to perform a surgical operation on the nose of Charley, one of his Delawares, whose horse, slipping in a skirmish with a bear, brought the hammer of the Indian's rifle into such violent contact with his nose that the latter was broken. Frémont succeeded in adjusting it and it healed satisfactorily.

Passing on into the valley of the "Upper Sacramento" (Pitt River), on the 29th, he camped above Fall River in latitude 40° 58′ 43″, longitude 121° 07′ 59″. The next day the course of Pitt River was followed up to another camp at the head of a valley so round that Frémont gave it the name of Round Valley (now Big Valley). This camp was in latitude 41° 17′ 17″. On the first day of May, 1846, the expedition arrived at a large lake, camping at its southeastern end, in latitude 41° 48′ 49″, longitude 121° 15′ 24″. The lake which now bears the name of Rhett was named at this time by Frémont "in friendly remembrance of Mr.

Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, who is connected with one of the events of my life which brought with it an abiding satisfaction." What this event was is not disclosed.

When they were about to leave Round Valley, Archambeau went off to hunt and that was the last seen of him for two days which worried the leader a great deal. He was greatly relieved when Archambeau returned. The man had been pursuing game and became worn out. His return "spread pleasure through the camp, where he was a general favourite. . . . I loved to have my camp cheerful and took care always for the health and comfort which carry good temper with them." This was the secret of Frémont's undoubted success with his men. If he ever had any disagreements none have ever come down to us, either by record or by report. On the contrary his men, no matter how hard the conditions, appear always to have been loyal, cheerful, and devoted.

The men were provided with tents at the start but they grew tired of them and begged permission to leave them behind, and now they took the weather as it came. The wait to find Archambeau refreshed the men and horses, and the next stretch was a long one north to a stream, flowing into Rhett Lake, which Frémont named McCrady after a boyhood friend who came into his mind. On the 6th of May they reached the (lower?) Klamath Lake at its outlet, and now met with the Indians of the neighbourhood again. On his former trip, Frémont made the mistake of thinking the Klamath Meadows were the lake, and also that the head of the Sacramento was here. In a letter written to Benton, later, he touches lightly on the error concerning the lake but does not mention the other. The Indians told of another river coming in at the upper end of the lake whence there was a village. Still going north they camped on the night of May 6, on what Frémont later named Denny's Branch, in latitude 42° 17′ 56″, longitude, 121° 52′ 45″. In the morning the camp was visited by a number of Indians who had ap-

peared suddenly, from no one could tell where. They said they were hungry and the Captain directed that they should be fed and given presents, which was done.

Two more rough days' travel between the lake and the foot of the mountain and over ridges brought them to a point within some twenty miles of their former camp on Klamath Meadows, where Frémont had turned eastward on the second expedition. While the Captain, this evening of May 8th, was standing alone by the camp-fire, thinking over plans and possibilities, his quick ear suddenly was roused by the sound of horses' hoofs approaching, and presently two horsemen emerged from the darkness into the firelight. It was Neal, the former blacksmith, and a companion named Sigler, also known to Frémont. They were messengers from a United States officer, Lieutenant Gillespie, who was following with despatches from the government. The Indians had tried to cut off Neal and Sigler but they had outstripped them. Neal was of the opinion that Gillespie with only three men, could not get through. Frémont, therefore, immediately selected ten of his best men, Carson, Owens, Godey, Basil Lajeunesse, four Delawares, Denny, and Basil's brother, and at dawn he was on the backward trail to meet the Lieutenant. After making about forty-five miles they arrived in the afternoon of May 9th at Denny's Branch where there was a natural meadow enclosed by forest where they had before camped, and here it was decided to stop and wait for Gillespie's arrival as he was sure to come this way. Just as the sun was setting he was observed with his three men, approaching. Frémont had now been eleven months without news from home and he was delighted to see someone from that part of the world.

Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie of the Marine Corps, U. S. N., was sent from Washington in November, 1845, to reach California by the shortest route through Mexico to Mazatlan with despatches for the American Consul at Monterey, and with instructions to find Frémont where-

ever he was.[1] This incident, and the papers or other information which Gillespie bore, have been the cause of a great amount of discussion, and even controversy, as to just what they exactly were, and how much authority for action they conveyed directly or indirectly to Frémont. The first battles of the Mexican War were fought on the 8th and the 9th of May, the very days when Neal and Gillespie reached Frémont. They did not then know these facts, but from Gillespie's documents and personal information it would probably not have been difficult to fix, approximately, the dates when such collisions were likely to occur, estimating the positions and intentions of the American forces months back, and of the thousands of troops which Mexico had long before set in motion toward the Rio Grande, to meet the invasion. Some writers appear to assume that the Mexican War, by the battles mentioned, broke out of a clear, peaceful sky, whereas the currents were surging towards this result for a very long period, and it was a dull person who could not have predicted with certainty the actual denouement. Frémont was not dull.

Lieutenant Gillespie brought a letter of introduction from the Secretary of State, Mr. Buchanan, and letters and papers from Senator Benton and family. The letter from the Secretary of State was directed to me in my private capacity, and, though seeming nothing beyond an introduction, it accredited the bearer, and in connection with circumstances and place of delivery it indicated a purpose in sending it. From the letter I learned nothing, but it was intelligibly explained to me by my previous knowledge, by the letter from Senator Benton, and by communications from Lieutenant Gillespie. This officer informed me also that he was directed by the Secretary of State to acquaint

[1] After Gillespie left Sutter's Fort, Captain Sutter wrote to Castro warning him against Gillespie as an agent of the United States and recommending the establishment of a "respectable garrison" at his fort, before the arrival of more American emigrants. He also expected the Mexican government to buy out his establishment. See H. H. Bancroft, *Pacific States*, vol. xxii., p. 65.

me with his instructions to the consular agent, Mr. Larkin, which were to ascertain the disposition of the California people and conciliate their feelings in favour of the United States. This idea was no longer practicable as actual war was inevitable and immediate; moreover it was in conflict with our own instructions. We dropped this idea from our minds, but falling on others less informed, it came dangerously near losing us California. The letter of Senator Benton, while apparently only one of friendship and family details, was a trumpet giving no uncertain note. Read by the light of many conversations and discussions with himself and other governing men in Washington, it clearly made me know that I was required by the Government to find out any foreign schemes in relation to California, and to counteract them so far as was in my power. His letters made me know distinctly that at last the time had come when England must not get a foothold; that we *must be first.* I was to *act* discreetly but positively.[1]

The officer who had had charge of the despatches from the Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Sloat, and who had purposely been made acquainted with their import, accordingly made his way to Captain Frémont, who thus became acquainted with the state of affairs and the intentions of the Government. Being absolved from any duty as an explorer, Captain Frémont was left to his duty as an officer in the service of the United States, with the further authoritative knowledge that the Government intended to take possession of California.[2]

Naturally the night of Gillespie's arrival was full of interesting talk around the three camp-fires, and it was eleven o'clock before the men were asleep.[3] Alone, Captain Frémont remained sitting by his fire, re-reading his letters and

[1] *The Conquest of California*, Jessie Benton Frémont, from the notes of General Frémont, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 922. Mrs. Frémont also calls attention to the fact that instructions to a consul from the Secretary of State could not affect other and different instructions from the Secretary of War and of the Navy. Commodore Sloat was deemed too slow in his action a little later.

[2] Letter of George Bancroft, September 3d, 1886, *ib.*, 924.

[3] A large party always has several camp-fires, of course.

pondering on the possibilities which the news had opened up to him. The camp was absolutely still—not even the movement of the customary guard broke the quiet, for in their sense of security, in a region where the Indians before had been friendly, Frémont had omitted the guard, and for only the second time, the other occasion having been on the island in Salt Lake.

Suddenly there was one of those commotions among the horses which indicate the intrusion of some foreign element. They were by the shore of the lake, about a hundred yards away, and the Captain, not rousing his men, took a revolver and went out to see what the trouble might be. The mules were especially alarmed. "A mule," he says, "is a good sentinel, and when he quits eating and stands with his ears stuck straight out taking notice it is best to see what is the matter. The mules knew that Indians were around, but nothing seemed stirring, . . . and I returned to the fire and my letters."[1]

He should have investigated more thoroughly, but his mind was so engrossed with determining the best line of action to pursue that he soon forgot the disturbance, and, at length deciding to return at once to the Sacramento Valley, he turned in.

He was soon aroused by the sound of Carson's voice calling to Basil, "What 's the matter over there?" followed instantly by the cry from both Owens and Carson, "Indians!" The Delawares were immediately on the defensive, seeking cover, engaging with their rifles the onslaught of a band of Klamaths, in the dim firelight. Frémont and the others were with them in a moment. The crack of rifles, the twang and whizz of bow-and-arrow filled the air. The Delaware Crane went down with five arrows through him,

[1] Mules I always found to be as good as watch-dogs to indicate the approach of Indians; friendly or unfriendly it was all the same to the mules. They had a violent objection to any kind of Indian, even to our guides whom they saw daily, when we had any. Mules pointed their ears even when there was apparently no sign or prospect of Indians and they never failed.

and a rifle ball dropped the Klamath chief at the same instant. Checked by this loss of their leader the foe fell back into the darkness, pouring in a rain of arrows, but not venturing again into the open. Blankets were hung on branches to break the force of the arrows. The horses had been quickly driven into camp by Owens and were safe there. Arrows and bullets flew for a time at the slightest move, and the Frémont men lay with their guns ready throughout the rest of that fatal night.

Daylight revealed sad losses. The Captain's favourite, Basil Lajeunesse, had been instantly killed, while asleep, by a blow on the head from an axe, and it was this which had caught the quick ear of Carson, and saved the annihilation of the party. The half-breed Denny was shot with arrows, and the Delaware Crane was dead where he fell. The attacking party had numbered fifteen or twenty. The chief was recognised as the man who had given Gillespie a salmon at the lake outlet. His quiver contained forty beautifully made arrows, the most efficient weapon, according to Carson, for a night attack. These arrows were iron-headed and for about six inches, were poisoned, as is frequently the case.

Frémont now started to make his way back to his main party who had been ordered to pack up and come after him as soon as their breakfast was over. The dead were placed on mules and the cavalcade started. Soon the lake was seen to be full of canoes heading for a point where the trail passed close along the shore, hemmed in by high rocks, and to prepare for fight the party turned into the woods where the dead were buried amid some dense bushes of laurel, the graves being dug with hunting knives. The enemy, disconcerted by this mysterious movement of the whites, failed in their plan of ambush and Frémont safely reached his main force without an encounter. The other Delawares were in a rage over the loss of their comrades and blackened their faces. The Captain sat among them to console them and approved a plan they formed to trap the Klamaths

who were lurking around. This plan was for the main body to start, leaving the Delawares behind. The Klamaths, they said, would skulk into the camp, and the Delawares from ambush would have their chance to secure a few scalps to atone for those lost.[1]

In the morning, May 11th, the Delawares rode a short distance ahead, halted, and when the main party had passed, they left their horses hidden and crept back to the camp on foot. They got two scalps, and wounded several Klamaths; the rest escaped. Moving on some three miles the party went into camp, built a strong corral for the animals, and put themselves on the defensive. The Captain did not neglect his observations and obtained for the latitude 42° 36′ 35″ and longitude 121° 58′ 45″.[2] From here the northward course was continued along Upper Klamath Lake and on the 12th of May the caravan began to approach the principal Klamath village of which they had earlier had information. Carson and Owens with ten men were sent forward to reconnoitre at the mouth of the river where the village was situated. They were discovered and they immediately opened fire. When Frémont arrived, the first thing he saw was a canoe driven by the current against a bank with a dead Klamath sitting in the stern still holding his paddle. Halting for nothing the Captain and his band plunged into the stream, about sixty yards wide, where a small rapid made it fordable, and rushed to the aid of Carson and the others who were being pressed by a large body of the enemy. Their

[1] "The late emigrants across the mountains, and especially from Oregon, had commenced a war of extermination upon them [the Indians] shooting them down like wolves, men, women, and children, wherever they could find them. Some of the Indians were undoubtedly bad and needed punishment, but generally the whites were the aggressors; and as a matter of course the Indians retaliated whenever opportunities occurred."—Theodore T. Johnson in *Sights in the Gold Region and Scenes by the Way*, New York, 1849, p. 152. If we could have the Indian side of many a white man's story our sympathies might frequently be reversed.

[2] Text and latitude table differ 10″ here. I follow the table 35″ instead of 45″.

arrows were no match for the sure rifles of the Americans, and they were now forced back into the woods with fourteen dead. The onslaught was so determined and sudden that they were obliged to leave their arrows where they had spread them fan-like behind the bushes to be ready for quick use. The village near by had been abandoned. The huts were set on fire by Frémont's men and were consumed together with quantities of fish drying on scaffolds.

Leaving the scene of this devastation Frémont went on a mile or so and camped, throwing out scouts everywhere. Indians were reported after noon, and Frémont with Carson and several others rode out to investigate. They came suddenly on an Indian with arrow drawn to the head, for Carson's benefit, he being in advance. Carson's gun missed fire. Frémont shot hastily. The Indian did not fall so Frémont rode him down with his fine horse Sacramento, of which he was very proud. The arrow, therefore, flew wild, and at the same instant the Delaware, Sagundai, leaped from his mount and with a blow from his war club finished the Klamath. After this episode, the Indians having been sufficiently punished, Frémont rested in his lodge where Lieutenant Gillespie came in "full of admiration for my men and their fitness for the life they were leading." The camp was undisturbed that night. The Klamaths had found out the quality of the American rifles and the inadequacy of the bow in competition except at very close quarters. The fact that they had spread their arrows on the ground, behind bushes as breastworks, proves how little they knew about gunpowder.

Frémont made his usual observations which placed this camp, on what he named Torrey River, after the great botanist, in latitude 42° 41 '30", longitude 121° 52' 08". This was May 12, 1846. It would be interesting to know whether the Indians of the destroyed village really had any hand in the night attack.[1] Carson had opened fire on it apparently

[1] It does not seem certain that it was the Klamath tribe which made this attack. It might have been a band of the Pitt River (Palaihnihan) Indians,

without ascertaining its attitude towards the whites. This was the manner of the frontier; life for a life, scalp for a scalp.

The party went on southward camping again on the lake, and for the last time in latitude 42° 21′ 43″ and longitude 121° 41′ 23″ on what Frémont named Wetowah Creek, after one of the Delawares.[1] Two days later as he was riding along a trail with Maxwell and Archambeau some distance in advance, he came to a fresh Indian scalp they had stuck up on an arrow. This had belonged to a young Indian who had sent an arrow, at sight, well aimed to hit Maxwell, but that agile hunter having thrown himself on the instant from his horse, the Indian paid the penalty.

Two or three days after this several of the men were suddenly attacked. One of the Indians was killed: the others escaped into the timber. A little later a strong party began an attack but were quickly silenced with the exception of one, who, from behind a rock, kept up a dangerous fire of arrows, driving the whole Frémont force back out of range, till Carson crept around on his flank and shot him through the heart. Carson presented the bow and arrows to Lieutenant Gillespie. The trail had been leading into a rough canyon, but Frémont foiled the enemy's purpose by avoiding this defile so admirable for an ambush.

After this there was no more trouble with Indians and the caravan travelled back to the Sacramento Valley, reaching Lassen's once more on the 24th of May, 1846. Here Frémont wrote a letter to Senator Benton, "a guarded letter, chiefly to call the attention of Mr. Buchanan to the Indians among whom I had been travelling, especially to the fact that they were unfriendly to us but friendly to the English, by whom they were supplied with arms from a Hudson Bay's post on the Umpqua conveniently near to the coast." Here

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who were much more warlike and troublesome, as they had seen more of the white men.

[1] The table of latitudes gives 42°, 21′, 23″.

Storage Basket, California Tribes

Size about 2′ x 2′6″

Collection American Museum

is a charge that the hostility of these Indians was due to the influence of the H. B. Company, a charge that was often made during the power of that company in this region.[1] The Klamaths had perhaps mistaken the Frémont party for a trapping company. The arrival at Lassen's practically ended the exploration programme of the Third Frémont Expedition. The Captain, in his letter to Benton, speaks of an intention of now proceeding "directly homewards by the Colorado," though he had before renounced that plan for the northern tour. If he actually had this intention circumstances directed his course otherwise, but it seems probable that the talk about exploring the lower Colorado was merely a ruse to kill time till news should come that General Taylor had provoked the Mexicans to action. Some stirring days were before him; days full of perplexing conditions to tax his judgment and his courage. California was breaking from its moorings, and Americans were there to seize the helm.

[1] Thos. J. Farnham, *Travels in California and Oregon*, p. 422, states that "Governor Castro had stirred up the Indians against him, particularly the Hamath tribe." Both the H. B. Co. and the Mexicans were behind the Klamath hostility if this is true. Both were capable of such action, as proved by their previous record.

CHAPTER XV

THE BEAR FLAG AFFAIR

A Decree of Expulsion — Chrysopylæ or the Golden Gate — Dispersing Indians—Capturing Mexican Horses—The Bear Flag—Capture of Sonoma —Victory in the First Battle—Murder on Both Sides—A Waiting Game —The Mexican War—Tardiness of Commodore Sloat—The Flag Raised at Monterey—The Sonoma Battalion—A Rugged Band—Walpole's Impressions—Commodore Stockton to Command—Frémont and Gillespie Join his Forces.

OWING to the movements of the United States troops, in 1845, toward the Rio Grande, and the counter move of the Mexican troops, with the intention of attack if the Americans crossed the Nueces, the Mexican government had apparently awakened to the importance of carrying out its decree of prohibition against Americans in California who had not become Mexican citizens. To all such, lands could not be sold, and the fact that they already had bought and paid for lands made no difference. Consul Larkin was accordingly informed, April 30, 1846, by the Mexican sub-prefect to notify "such purchasers that the transactions were invalid and they themselves subject to be expelled whenever the government might find it convenient."[1]

Naturally this decree created excitement and resentment among the numerous Americans who were permanently settled around the Bay of San Francisco and who before this had had several "scares," which drove them to Sutter's Fort for refuge and drilling to resist attack, the last only

[1] From the Sawyer Documents, Bancroft Collection. Cited by Richman, *California, etc.*, p. 308.

the year before. Castro had ordered Frémont out of the country; when would he order all other Americans to leave? This was a momentous question. It is needless to say the Americans had no intention of abandoning on order their property and departing; it was not the American way. General Castro began to gather horses with the purpose of utilising them for his prospective military operations, and he obtained 170 from General Vallejo, in command of the northern frontier. It was necessary to take these animals from the Mission of San Rafael, where they were, to Castro's headquarters, then at the Mission of Santa Clara. An Indian coming in told the Americans of seeing a large party of armed men (they imagined this) advancing up the Sacramento, which the Americans believed must be a force destined to attack Captain Frémont.

At the Mexican council of war held in Monterey by Castro on receipt of the renewed instructions from the home government to drive out Frémont and the other Americans, a manifesto was issued in which attention is directed to "the imminent risk of an invasion founded on the extravagant design of an American Captain of the United States Army,"[1] and it proceeds to show that the Captain withdrew to the north merely to strengthen and increase his force. There were, besides the preamble to this document, five stated "articles," and the whole was signed by Vallejo, Prudon, José Castro, Alvarado, Carillo, and the prefect, Manuel Castro. A proclamation was issued instructing judges that they were not allowed to authorise sales of land to foreigners, and that such purchases would be null and void.

There were two sets of instructions to American officers on the coast, one to Consul Larkin, from the Secretary of State, who communicated with this official at long intervals, and the other from the Navy Department to the officer in command of the Pacific station, Commodore Sloat. The State Department told Larkin to pacify the Californians

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 500.

and use every means in his power to peaceably acquire the country. He was in no way to ruffle the sensibilities of the natives. The navy instructions, on the other hand, ordered Sloat on declaration of war with Mexico to raise the American flag and take possession, particularly of the port of San Francisco, and warned him to be expeditious about it while preserving friendly relations with the inhabitants. There were no War Department orders as yet for this region as there were no soldiers here, except Frémont, who was the representative of the army, with such instructions as he had derived from his letters, from Lieutenant Gillespie's verbal communication, and his original general order to use his judgment.

Whatever may be said of Captain Frémont's action at this period, it seems to me, nobody, can charge him with anything but patriotic motives. He was in a peculiar and difficult situation, far from headquarters and with no chance for speedy communication. He knew that the Cabinet in Washington intended to acquire California; he knew, without doubt, exactly the orders that had been sent to Sloat, at intervals for a whole year, by George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy; and he knew from his experience in the country that the recent instructions received through Gillespie from the State Department by Larkin were out of date, and impossible of application under the circumstances.[1]

The settlers informed Frémont that the Indians were taking to the mountains, which was an indication of what they expected, and a courier came from Sutter, warning the Captain that Castro had sent two men out among the Indians to rouse them against the settlers. Frémont there-

[1] Josiah Royce in his *California* has given a very careful analysis of the various questions connected with Frémont's operations in the conquest of California, but as his pen is rather unfriendly it is well to discount, to some extent at any rate, his positiveness. For some reason he appears to have disliked Frémont and he seems to have permitted the dislike to colour his criticism. This may be said also of his contributions on the subject to the *Atlantic Monthly* and to the *Century Magazine*.

The Golden Gate

And San Francisco of an early date

From Print Collection, New York Library

upon kept a special watch on the Indians to anticipate any attack on the settlers. The camp was moved southward several stages, and on the 30th of May a halt was made at The Buttes of the Sacramento, "an isolated mountain ridge about six miles long" and 2690 feet, at its summit, above the sea. Neal accompanied the party, and so also did Samuel Hensley, one of the leading Americans. Among the new recruits, if they may be so called, was also a man named Ezekiel Merritt, "rugged, fearless, and simple," whom Frémont speaks of as his "Field Lieutenant" among the settlers. Merritt was a very rough, uncouth man, but energetic and faithful.

The camp was in the midst of a fine game country, the air was balmy, there were wood and water everywhere, and it was an ideal region, where every one was well fed and happy. The latitude of this paradise was 39° 14′ 41″, longitude, 121° 33′ 36″.

It was at this period that Frémont named the entrance to the Bay of San Francisco, *Chrysopylæ*, or Golden Gate, from the "form of the entrance . . . and its advantages to commerce." The name was first put on his map accompanying the Geographical Memoir, in June, 1848. Here also the Captain noted the correction of the coast line from his own and Captain Beechey's observations which later caused the difficulty with Captain Wilkes.

The camp at The Buttes became the rendezvous of all the American settlers and information came in frequently as to conditions and tendencies. It was concluded from the movements of the Indians that they were preparing to carry out Castro's reported instructions to burn the settlers' grain in the fields—it was now very dry—and otherwise harass them. This may seem incredible to many readers but the history of Mexican and Spanish methods is ample proof of the probability of the report. Frémont resolved to deal the Indians a blow, and teach them to respect the rights of the settlers (which as yet they had in no way

infringed). With a large number of his men he consequently moved out, early one morning, following up the right bank of the Sacramento to strike the various rancherias or villages which were strung along that stream.

At the first one the scouts reported that the Indians,—"hostiles" Frémont calls them,—feathered, and with their faces painted black, were in the midst of their war ceremonies.[1] The Frémont men therefore rode rapidly upon them and several Indians were killed in the "dispersion." On rode the white avengers, *avenging in advance*(!), crushing and dispersing one after the other of the villages, but without taking any more lives according to the record. "This was a rude, but necessary measure," says Frémont, "to prevent injury to the whites," but I must confess that I am somewhat dubious as to the correctness of his view. However, there may have been necessity for stringent action for Sutter says: "I left in company of Major Reading, and most all of the Men in my employ, for a Campaign with the Mukelumney, which has been engaged by Castro and his Officers to revolutionize all the Indians against me to kill all the foreigners, burn their houses, and Wheatfields," etc.[2] Hensley and Neal were of the opinion that the Americans would have to leave the country, or fight for their homes, and, everything considered, the prospect certainly looked very much that way.

Owing to the original clash between Frémont and Castro, Consul Larkin had asked the American Consul at Mazatlan for a warship as several were there, and the U. S. man-of-war *Portsmouth*, Commander Montgomery, had been sent

[1] Once I was among the Shewits (Pai Utes) when they were on the "war path" against the Mormons, and I was greatly interested at their fantastic styles of face painting. Some had their faces divided into three colours, black, red, white, others had only one or two and each colour was spotted with other colour. With all this fierce painting nothing happened to the Mormons, however, not even to a Mormon who was with me. My guide, a near relative of theirs, said they would steal all I had, but they did n't steal anything.

[2] *Sutters' Diary*, June 3d.

to Monterey, arriving April 22d, and thence went to Yerba Buena, or San Francisco as it was later called. After a consultation in Frémont's camp at Lassen's, it was decided that Lieutenant Gillespie should proceed to San Francisco and secure from Montgomery, on Frémont's requisition as an officer of the army, some much-needed supplies. Gillespie accordingly left on May 28th. On June 3d the *Portsmouth* was at San Francisco, and the requisition was honoured. On the 8th of June, Captain Frémont moved from The Buttes and on the 12th re-occupied his old camp on the American River near Sutter's Fort. The following day Gillespie arrived at Sutter's Landing on his return with the supplies in the *Portsmouth's* launch. Frémont had previously received a cordial letter from Montgomery, and by Lieutenant Hunter, in charge of the launch, he now received another equally cordial. The ship's surgeon Duvall came, on his own suggestion, to arrange Frémont's medicine chest and render other assistance. Frémont himself remained at Sutter's for several days.

Merritt, and the other American settlers, meanwhile had decided to take definite action, and begin their own emancipation. They were the predominating element north of San Francisco Bay, they were all good shots, and they were not afraid of the Mexicans, whose physical bravery was held by them at a very low estimate. Twelve men (twenty-five says Semple) accordingly intercepted the officer, Lieutenant Arce, and his fourteen men, in charge of the cavalcade of horses on the way to Castro's headquarters, an easy matter as he must pass near Sutter's Fort, and at dawn on June 9th the Americans took the horses from him, except one for each to ride, and six belonging to an individual, and sent him and his men back to Castro with messages quite uncomplimentary.[1]

[1] Wm. A Richardson, the year before, wrote to Larkin, Dec. 19, 1845: "If the party goes over to the north to pass over horses, as they say, we shall be

Having done this, Merritt, Dr. Semple (a little later one of the editors of *The Californian*, the first newspaper), and the other leading spirits concluded to take an even more radical step: they captured by surprise the chief town of the region, Sonoma, where General Vallejo had headquarters, fortified by nine small brass cannon, and a couple of hundred muskets, all equally inefficient. Thirty-three Americans achieved the capture without a struggle, with the watch-words, "Equal rights and equal laws," as they surrounded the Vallejo residence, before the General had arisen. He invited them all to take a drink with him, which they very willingly did, and everything was most amicable. Writing afterwards in the third number of *The Californian*, August 22, 1846, Semple was proud that this unorganised force had behaved so well. "However able," he writes,

> may be the pen which shall record these events, none but those who have witnessed the moderation, and uniform deportment of the little garrison left at Sonoma, can do them justice, for there has been no time in the history of the world where men without law, without officers, without the scratch of a pen, as to the object in view, have acted with that degree of moderation and strict observance of persons and property as was witnessed on this occasion.[1]

Though the men were dressed in leather hunting shirts, some very greasy, and were a rough-looking lot (clothes did not make the man in the great West), they treated very well the several prisoners they felt obliged to take. These were General Vallejo (afterwards a staunch American and altogether a remarkably fine character), his brother, and his secretary Prudon; taken because of their influence in Mexican affairs. They were carried, with their interpreter Leese, to Frémont's camp and Leese was arrested there by

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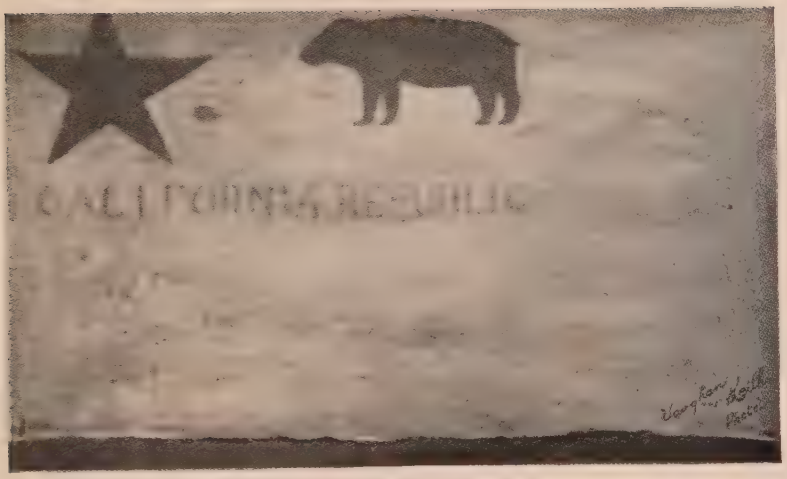
ready to oppose them and give them a warm reception, if required." Cited by Richman, p. 490, *California under Spain and Mexico*.

[1] *The Californian*, Aug. 22, 1846, "The Bear Flag Party, by an Eyewitness."



A.—The original "Bear Flag," made by Todd at Sonoma, June 14, 1846; "California Republic."

B.—Guidon belonging to Sonoma Troop, California Battalion; "Republic of California."

These flags were destroyed in the San Francisco Earthquake disaster.

From *Out West Magazine*, August, 1905.

Frémont's order. On the same day that Sonoma was captured, which was the 14th of June, 1846, the captors got together and partially organised the "Republic of California." To signal this event a man named Todd (later a prisoner and freed by Captain Ford at Petaluma) made a flag by painting with lampblack and pokeberry juice (which is a purplish red), on white cotton cloth (from a white petticoat purchased for a dollar from Miss Anna Frisbie, then visiting in Sonoma), which had a stripe of red flannel across the bottom, a large star in the upper left-hand corner, and just to the right of this and facing it at the top of the flag, the figure of what he intended for a grizzly bear.[1] The bear emblem was suggested by Captain Ford. Across the middle were drawn the words, "*California Republic*," all of which indicated the almost spontaneous nature of the whole effort to secure justice and protection. This flag gave the name to the movement. It was run up on the vacant Mexican staff and the "Bear Flag Party" became a fixture in the history of California. Even had the Mexican War not occurred at this moment, it is doubtful if the Mexicans, alone, could ever have dislodged the Bear Flag Republic from the country north of San Francisco Bay. The road to Oregon was open and recruits, both English and American, would speedily have come that way, and with the ability of all these men to shoot true, and their energy and fearlessness, their movement, probably, would have been permanent, particularly as many of the native Californians were in sympathy, and Pio Pico and Castro were at swords' points.

A small garrison was left at Sonoma, consisting of about eighteen men, under command of Wm. B. Ide, which in the course of a few days was increased to forty. On the 18th day of June, Mr. Ide, by the consent of the garrison, published a proclamation setting

[1] A lone star was in the flag of Texas, and a lone star had been the only emblem of the flag raised by Isaac Graham in the California revolt of ten years before—a red star on a white ground, representing the single state. A star for each state is the American idea.

forth the objects for which the party had gathered and the principles which would be adhered to in the event of their success.[1]

It recited the grievances of the settlers in not being allowed a voice in the government and being threatened with expulsion, and declared that "all persons not found under arms would not be disturbed in their persons, their property, or their social relations."[2] "To overthrow a government," continued Ide's proclamation, "which has seized upon the property of the Missions for its own aggrandizement: who has ruined and shamefully oppressed the laboring people of California by their enormous exactions on goods imported into the country, is the determined purpose of the brave men who are associated under my command."

The reference to the Missions was to the fact that after the independence of Mexico, these establishments had become prey of the politicians. The Missions had grown very rich. They were thenceforward compelled to contribute heavily and from about 1830 their actual decline was rapid. Their rich fields and gardens were regarded with covetous eyes by many an official, and by 1840 these unique communities, the glory of early California, were nearing their end; some already had reached it.

In the course of the Sonoma occupation, two young Americans, Cowie (or Cowey) and Fowler, were captured on the road by Mexicans, and, it is claimed, were horribly tortured and mutilated before being killed, all in a manner too revolting to be described. The Bear Flag soldiers, discovering this, sent a force of twenty-two men to attack the perpetrators of the crime, the Mexican command under Padilla (a noted outlaw some say—a barber say others), who had been joined by Captain de la Torre, of Castro's

[1] *The Californian*, Aug. 22, 1846, "The Bear Flag Party, by an Eyewitness."

[2] Commander Montgomery in a letter to Frémont dated Sausalito, June 23d, describes the capture of the horses and of Sonoma as "master-strokes," but thought they ought to have been "followed up by a rush upon Santa Clara, where Castro might have been taken by thirty men." *Memoirs*, p. 527.

army, the combined strength amounting to over eighty men. Captain Ford, at the head of the Americans, met them on June 23d and directed his men so well that their shots were fiercely destructive. Eight of the enemy were killed (according to Semple), two were wounded, and a horse wounded.[1] This encounter took place on the Camilo ranch at Olompali, between San Rafael and Petaluma. Torre had been sent by General Castro to reconnoitre the situation at Sonoma, which he was planning to attack. Several American prisoners were liberated by this action, among them Todd, the man who painted the Bear Flag. Letters from Torre purposely sent to be intercepted were intercepted, and the false information they conveyed enabled Torre to escape. The three bearers of the letters were killed by the Delawares according to Frémont, partly to avenge the deaths of Cowie and Fowler, but Richman states that the three strangers were shot down by Kit Carson and a party sent to intercept them. However that might be it was a savage, cold-blooded proceeding and a blot on the conduct of Frémont and his men.[2]

Neither Commander Montgomery nor Consul Larkin, nor anyone else on the coast, could have had the inside information as to the United States government's intentions which Frémont possessed, and the situation naturally had a different aspect to them. Professor Royce points out that Frémont represented to Montgomery that he required the supplies he got, for the continuance of his scientific work, but the reason for this statement was probably the same that caused him to send his resignation to Senator Benton to hold ready at this time; the outcome was uncertain and he did not wish to commit either the government, or an officer, to his action unless it might later be deemed correct.[3] He

[1] "The Bear Flag Party, by an Eyewitness," from *The Californian*, Aug. 22, 1846, reprinted in *Out West Magazine*, vol. xxiii., pp. 152 et seq.

[2] See *Memoirs*, p. 325, Richman's *California*, p. 313, Benton's *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., and Royce's *California*, p. 82.

[3] In a letter to Benton dated July 25th, he says that his intention was to

had decided that the time had come for him to act in the best interest of the United States, but he recognised the hazard and made it possible for his government easily to repudiate his course, and he eliminated Montgomery's responsibility for giving him the supplies except for scientific purposes.

Benton says of the information brought by Gillespie:

> The verbal communications from the Secretary of State were that Mr. Frémont should watch and counteract any foreign scheme on California, and conciliate the good will of the inhabitants towards the United States. . . . It was not to be supposed that Lieutenant Gillespie had been sent so far, and through so many dangers, merely to deliver a common letter of introduction on the shores of the Tlamath Lake.

He also states:

> Three great operations fatal to American interests were then going on, and without remedy if not arrested at once. These were—1. The massacre of Americans and the destruction of their settlements in the Valley of the Sacramento. 2. The subjection of California to British protection. 3. The transfer of the public domain to British subjects. And all this with a view to anticipate the events of the Mexican War, and to shelter California from the arms of the United States.[1]

Montgomery states that Larkin told him "that the feeling is rife that California is soon to be governed by England or the United States, predilections being divided."[2]

In his first item, Senator Benton erred, for there had been no massacre of Americans or destruction of their settlements in the Valley of the Sacramento.

At this time (1846) the town of San Francisco only had

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use these supplies to get out of the country, but this was doubtless only a further safeguard, as he seems to have had no idea of going.

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years*, vol. ii.

[2] Montgomery and Frémont: New Documents on the Bear Flag Affair, by Josiah Royce, *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., pp. 780 et seq.

between one and two hundred population, but it was then recognised as the nucleus of "one of the largest and most opulent commercial cities in the world."[1] "In one year the population had increased to about 1200 and houses were rising in all directions." There was no question, therefore, from the start, as to the future of San Francisco.

The horses captured from Arce had been sent to Frémont's camp and there they were held, but the prisoners were taken to Sutter's Fort. Sutter had expressed surprise that Frémont had sanctioned this rebellion, and this seems to have been reported to the Captain, for when the latter followed to Sutter's, something passed between them. Sutter had been elated at the prospect, so Bidwell states, of securing California for the United States. After the interview with Frémont,

> in a few minutes Sutter came to me [Bidwell] greatly agitated, with tears in his eyes, and said that Frémont had told him that he was a Mexican, and that if he did not like what he (Frémont) was doing he would set him across the San Joaquin River and he could go and join the Mexicans. But, this flurry over, Sutter was soon himself again, and resumed his normal attitude of friendship towards Frémont, because he thought him to be acting in accordance with instructions from Washington.[2]

It will be remembered that Frémont had, and without cause, distrusted Bidwell when he arrived at Sutter's earlier in the year, and for some reason he seems to have been suspicious of Sutter's good faith also, the latter being a Mexican citizen and a supporter of Micheltorena.[3] The

[1] *What I Saw in California*, Edwin Bryant, 1848, p. 324. New York, Appleton, second edition.

[2] *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 520.

[3] Perhaps Frémont had discovered that Sutter on Frémont's first visit had sent a report "as an officer of the Government" to Micheltorena telling of Frémont's arrival and plans, which led to the visit of Lieut.-Col. Telles and twenty-five dragoons to inquire Frémont's business. But Frémont had gone on. See *Sutter's Diary*, cited in *The Life and Times of John A. Sutter*, by T. J. Schoonover, Sacramento, 1907, p. 75.

Bear Flag men of Sonoma joined Frémont when he came to that place, with ninety men, June 25th, and they went forth in an endeavour to meet the forces of Castro and Torre but without success. Frémont had now decided that he must assume command, as an officer in the army of the United States, with whom the navy was co-operating. "This gave to my movements the national character which must of necessity be respected by Mexico and by any foreign power with which she might ally herself; and would also hold offensive operations in check until actual war between the governments should make an open situation." In this remark the plan of the Captain is exhibited—that of holding the situation as it was, if possible, till the expected rupture should take place on the Rio Grande, or till news of it should arrive. He drew up his resignation, before referred to, to be sent to Senator Benton, in order that if necessary to repudiate his action, the government could do so. As Sutter was an officer of the Mexican government, Frémont placed in charge of Sutter's Fort, as a United States Post, his topographer, Edward Kern. Only one of Frémont's men ventured to disagree with him on the expediency or wisdom of the course he was pursuing, and this was Risdon Moore, who "expressed dissent verging on disobedience." He was promptly locked up in a barren, strong room in the bottom of one of the bastions. After a night here he resumed his place, without malice, and stood by the Captain through everything in the future.

General Castro issued two proclamations June 17th, one calling on his countrymen to unite against the foe, and the other stating that "All foreigners residing among us, occupied with their business, may rest assured of the protection of all the authorities of the department, whilst they refrain entirely from all revolutionary movements," which was a change of front. He had not yet learned about the war with the United States, and he was in trouble with Governor Pio Pico.

Bidwell, as Kern was in charge of the prisoners at Sutter's Fort, went to Sonoma to join Frémont. "The Bear Flag was still flying. . . . There was much doubt about the situation. Frémont gave us to understand that we must organise." Bidwell says before this uprising they had felt entirely secure, but this hardly could have been the case as the Bear Flag revolt was not started by Frémont, but by Merritt, Ide, and other active settlers, who felt the insecurity of their position, and Frémont only joined in as leader when he saw that the movement was determined and ought to be recognised. The meeting for organisation took place. All the proclamations proposed were too long, and Bidwell finally wrote this: "The undersigned hereby agree to organise for the purpose of gaining and maintaining the independence of California." The various documents were submitted to Gillespie for decision and he chose Bidwell's. "The meeting then took place, but Frémont's remarks gave us no light upon any phase of the situation. He neither averred nor denied that he was acting under orders from the United States Government."[1] But he told the men he would have nothing to do with the movement unless they would conduct themselves properly. Three companies were then organised; the captains elected were Henry L. Ford, Granville P. Swift, and Samuel J. Hensley.

Archie H. Gillespie, 1st Lieutenant U. S. M. Corps and Special and Confidential Agent for California, was in complete co-operation with Captain Frémont. He had not been selected by the powers in Washington for a difficult mission without being instructed in the expectations of the government, and his immediate acquiescence and aid in every move of Frémont indicates that he regarded it all as quite in line with the expectations, if not the instructions.

Professor Royce, in his admirable work, *California*,[2]

[1] Bidwell, *Century Magazine*, vol., xix., N. S., p. 522.

[2] *California. From the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco. A Study of American Character*, by Josiah Royce. Boston &

takes a too pessimistic view, it seems to me, of the whole Bear Flag episode, as well as of the career of Frémont. He appears to think because these men were in buckskin and somewhat greasy, and one or two got drunk, that they were, as a body, without responsibility, and that they treated the Mexicans with indignity and injustice. Occasional drunkenness was not regarded on the frontier (or anywhere else) at that time as a disgrace, or as proving a man's moral depravity. It is a fact that the entire American community north of San Francisco Bay were in the Bear Flag revolt, and most of them were men of upright character. They had good reason to be apprehensive of the action of the Mexican government, and its California representatives, which placed them in a precarious position. Castro's proclamation concerning protection of foreigners had said nothing about their lands.

Confiscation of property of foreigners, especially of Americans, was no new thing and not so improbable as Professor Royce and others appear to believe. Jedediah Smith, the Patties, and many more had suffered great losses, and the rankest imposition, both in California and in New Mexico, with the addition in frequent cases of revolting cruelties. These facts were well known to the settlers on the Sacramento, and especially to Carson, Walker, and the other frontiersmen with Frémont. They were all aware that once aroused, the Mexican officials halted at no form of vicious imposition or cruelty. The diabolical treatment of the Texans of the Santa Fé Expedition had not been forgotten, and "Remember the Alamo" still rang in their ears. The Mexican in war was, and still is, a man of cruelty.

In all the uncertainty, amid rumours of immediate war between Mexico and the United States (the Mexican War had already begun more than a month before); the proclama-

New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888. The date of the preface of this book is 1886, March, two months before Frémont dated the preface to his *Memoirs*.

tion declaring alien property void; the known determination of the United States to secure the Bay of San Francisco, if not all California; the frequent attempts to make an independent California—this insurrection which for convenience goes by the name of the flag raised at Sonoma, was a necessary and a logical outcome. These men, bred to manage their own affairs, did not need any special leader to crystallise the feeling that was in each one's heart—the Bear Flag movement was an imperative, and almost spontaneous, outgrowth of conditions. The revolt came first, leaders afterward; and the presence of Frémont, while it gave confidence, was a coincidence. Trouble was in the air.

Some writers hold that the revolt destroyed the careful plan of the Washington authorities, and of Larkin, their civil representative in California, to secure the country by peaceful means; but it is plain that this plan was shattered by the Mexican announcement, banishing foreigners and practically confiscating their lands and property, directed by the war prospects so long developing and now a fact. But after all this peace order could hardly be described as the full plan of an Administration which, for months, beginning with the 24th of June, 1845, had repeatedly notified Commodore Sloat to hoist the American flag over California, particularly over the Bay of San Francisco, at the very first opportunity.[1] Naturally this order was coupled with an admonition to do the work as peaceably as possible, in view of the representations of Larkin, but this was not a permit to ignore the main order to raise the flag.

Consul Larkin, closely and peacefully associated with the Mexicans at Monterey, and knowing the pro-American

[1] The California matter was entirely directed by George Bancroft. "The truth is," he writes, "no officer of the Government had anything to do with California, but the Secretary of the Navy, so long as I was in the Cabinet," letter to Frémont, 1886, cited *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N.S., p. 924. Bancroft approved all Frémont had done, and possibly Frémont's adherence to Commodore Stockton later in the affair was influenced by his then knowing that Bancroft was directing affairs.

tendencies of many of them, was sure he could bring about a bloodless consummation, and doubtless if California could have been dealt with, irrespective of Mexico, and other powers, in time he might have succeeded, but with Mexico heavily in debt to England, with France also on the watch, and with the situation altogether such that in the judgment of a diplomat like Duflot de Mofras (of the French Legation in Mexico), California would fall to "whatever nation chooses to send there a man-of-war and two hundred men," it seems clear that Larkin's plan was hopeless at this stage of the matter; at least was no reason for holding back. The nation that acted first would be first. And this was what gave Frémont his great concern and led him to foster the Bear Flag revolt.

Frémont's expeditions as a matter of fact all had been largely directed towards the acquisition of California; and the third expedition even had been given a thorough military equipment, and it was planned to be there in "the nick of time." And there it was; with conditions not exactly, perhaps, such as had been anticipated. Was the Captain on that account now to march away again with his sixty sharpshooters, or should he use the discretionary power given him in Washington and take advantage of this Bear Flag revolt to immediately establish the claim of the United States in advance of any other possible claimant? He knew that actual hostilities of the Mexican War were merely a matter of weeks, after the coming of spring, 1846; that the American troops on the Rio Grande and the Mexican troops could not long remain merely looking at one another. He, therefore, concluded to aid the Bear Flag revolt and thereby, as an American officer, secure possession in this region of San Francisco Bay which was the chief interest of Bancroft, Webster, Benton, President Polk, and all the other leading men of the Administration.

If his action was premature, it could be repudiated, as that of Commodore Jones had been, but if the government

VIEW OF VALLEJO, THE NEW CAPITAL OF CALIFORNIA.

Early Vallejo, California
From Print Collection of the New York Library

desired to utilise the incident it would be able to do so. Frémont, an American officer, being in possession of the country, the advent of a cruiser of another nation at the critical moment would have less importance. As before pointed out, while England undoubtedly wanted California, and undoubtedly had certain plans under way to acquire it, she had no intention, or desire, to go to war about it, as, indeed, she has always been conciliatory with the United States. But, if a British vessel unopposed, could sail into the Bay at the opportune moment, and raise her flag, it would be the United States which would have to be aggressive if they wanted the country. The Washington government had planned to have an American cruiser there first, but the tardy movement of Commodore Sloat came very near spoiling the broth. In that case Frémont's presence and occupation would have been a positive card in opposing British claims—the Bear Flag business practically put the Americans in possession, although some of our historians choose to treat the movement with ridicule. Bidwell, who was a serious man and a reliable one in every respect, does not appear to see anything ridiculous in the revolt though, at first, he did not approve, which was natural, owing to his affiliation with Sutter who was somewhat "on the fence" in the very beginning.

Commander Montgomery, writing June 16, 1846, to William B. Ide, says in reply to a request for powder: "and have no right or authority to furnish munitions of war, or in any manner to take sides with any political party, or even indirectly to identify myself, or official name, with any popular movement (whether of foreign or native residents) of the country, and thus, sir, must decline giving the required aid." As an officer of the navy he had no other course, and he would have been obliged to answer Frémont the same way, except that Frémont's diplomatic requisition was made "for scientific purposes," leaving any irregularity to be charged to Frémont himself and not to Montgomery.

In a letter to Montgomery dated June 16th, Frémont accordingly says:

My position has consequently become a difficult one. The unexpected hostility which has been exercised towards us on the part of the military authorities of California has entirely deranged the plan of our survey and frustrated my intention of examining the Colorado of the Gulf of California, which was one of the principal objects of this expedition. . . . It is therefore my present intention to abandon the farther prosecution of our exploration and proceed immediately across the mountainous country to the eastward . . . and thence to the frontier of Missouri. . . . The nature of my instructions and the peaceful nature of our operations do not contemplate any active hostility on my part, even in the event of war between the two countries; and therefore, although I am resolved to take such active and precautionary measures as I shall judge necessary for our safety, I am not authorised to ask from you any other than such assistance, as, without incurring yourself unusual responsibility, you would feel at liberty to afford me.[1]

In one of his later replies Montgomery says: "Although neutral in my position, I cannot be so in feeling and am anxiously looking for further intelligence."

The prisoners from Sonoma had arrived that very evening. They had insisted on surrendering to Frémont, who had already made his punitive expedition against the Indians, and was more or less implicated in the revolt. In view of the extra powerful force with which he had entered California, and the unnecessary readiness with which he placed himself in opposition to Castro, his knowledge that the war with Mexico could not now be far off, and his sympathy and aid to the revolutionists, this message to Montgomery

[1] "Montgomery and Frémont: New Documents on the Bear Flag Affair," by Josiah Royce. *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 780. Professor Royce makes much of the Frémont letter of June 16th to prove what Frémont's instructions were as compared with his later statements, but it seems to me that the later statements were much more likely to be correct.

sounds as if it were merely a document for Montgomery to file for his own future defence, if such defence should become necessary. If Frémont actually had wanted to leave for home he could have done so immediately after the Castro affair, the season being favourable, instead of going towards Oregon, within earshot as it were of Monterey, and loitering in California on a line of communication. Or as before mentioned he might have continued, without interference, on his way by the western side of the San Joaquin Valley, south to Tehachapi Pass and so on to the Colorado. There appears to have been nothing to prevent his leaving at any time, consequently these assertions of a desire to go back seem more like diplomacy than reality; they were merely precautionary.

Professor Royce remarks in his *California* (p. 85): "But it is at least necessary to remember that the show of official support which Commodore Sloat's seizure of Monterey would seem to have given to Captain Frémont was in fact but an accidental outcome of other events, and was not in the least contemplated by our government in its official instructions to the navy." This in a measure was true, but the "other events" had been anticipated for at least a whole year, and Secretary Bancroft, by repeated communications to Commodore Sloat, had been keeping him alive to the importance of immediate action when the "other events" should occur—that is, when the approaching, expected, and inevitable clash of troops should take place on the Rio Grande. Professor Royce and some other historians appear to forget the contiguous circumstances in their apparent desire to discredit Frémont. Why, it may be asked, did it happen that Captain Frémont found himself, after a previous thorough reconnaissance, in California, with sixty skilled marksmen, at the opportune moment and with orders from Washington to act according to his best judgment?

Captain Frémont was playing a waiting game as far as

he was able to do so. It was not possible for him to be definite under the circumstances and he daily expected news of the beginning of the war which would have given him a free hand in co-operation with the navy, for the co-operation of the navy in the event of war was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Rumours of hostilities on the Rio Grande came through Indian sources, finally confirmed by Commodore Sloat. No specific instructions to co-operate were necessary to the officers; but Commodore Sloat proved to possess no initiative and exhibited a singular reluctance to act when the time came. The Bear Flag revolt was a spontaneous outgrowth of conditions which had been augmenting in California for a number of years. It was partly precipitated by Mexican orders issued on account of the nearness of the impending war, and it was, therefore, hardly as accidental at this time as Professor Royce assumes. Diplomats and leaders who could not have prognosticated with some degree of exactness most of the events from the happenings of the last two or three years would have been blockheads. Everything had been leading towards these events as surely as brooks from the mountains flow down to the master stream. There was no mystery about it all; but actions had to be shaped to immediate conditions. There certainly is little ground for sneers concerning the efforts of a loyal American officer to find his duty and to do it to the best of his judgment and ability; on the contrary, his action should be commended, and I hope Frémont may be treated more generously in the future. Ridicule and contumely are perhaps entertaining, but they are neither criticism nor argument. Frémont may not always have done exactly the best thing, but he did what his deliberate judgment dictated and on the whole he did remarkably well.

Among the series of orders issued from the departments of war and navy [Bancroft] in the spring and summer of 1845, when

Texas was about to accept the offer of annexation and the threats of the Mexicans were to be put to the test, was one to Commodore Sloat, dated June 24th, containing general instructions to suit the emergency. He was warned to avoid any act of aggression, but was reminded of the defenceless condition of the Mexican ports on the Pacific, and directed to take possession of San Francisco the moment he heard that Mexico had declared war against the United States.[1]

But Larkin was informed by Buchanan that, "Whilst the president will make no effort and use no influence to induce the Californians to become one of the free and independent states of this union, yet if the people should desire to unite their destiny with ours, they would be received as brethren whenever this can be done without affording Mexico any just cause of complaint."[2] The latter order almost annulled the first in Sloat's mind.

News of the fighting on the Rio Grande reached Sloat May 17, 1846, the fighting having begun on April 24th by a skirmish on the part of the Mexicans. General Taylor had advised, *October 4, 1845*, an advance of troops to the Rio Grande, and this must have been after consultation on the subject for some time preceding the advice. It was a flat challenge to Mexico to defend, if she dared, the territory which the United States meant to appropriate. The order to so advance was issued January 13, 1846. Accordingly the United States army proceeded on the 8th of March, from Corpus Christi, where it had been stationed, and reached Point Isabel March 24th. A deputation of fifty Mexicans protested against this movement in vain. The American flag was unfurled and a battery, Fort Brown, at once erected. All Americans, including the consul, were then expelled from Matamoras opposite. It was these events which were reflected in the movement in California against Americans who were not citizens of Mexico. To assert, therefore, as

[1] *Westward Extension, 1841–1850*, by George Pierce Garrison, Ph.D., N.Y., Harpers, 1906, p. 232. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

some do, that there were no grounds for apprehension is absurd. The Governor of California would certainly be apprised of the war conditions and would receive orders accordingly. This was the basis of the proclamation against the Americans. It is not reasonable to suppose that with actual war with the United States begun, or about to begin by her resentment of invasion, Mexico would not take steps to secure her California possessions from further occupation by aggressive American settlers, armed exploring parties, and the like.

Sonoma was taken by the Bear party more than a month after the beginning of hostilities, and Governor Pio Pico must already have had news of the war and transmitted it to General Castro. Their differences would temporarily vanish in the face of the greater event, and in fact they were presently reconciled and they then combined to resist their common foe.

Commodore Sloat, instead of taking possession of the Californian ports, as repeatedly he had been warned by George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, immediately to do on the outbreak of war, was so fearful of committing the mistake of Commodore Jones, and was so in accord with Larkin's idea that the country could be acquired peacefully and without ruffling anyone's feelings, that he delayed action. He sent the *Cyane* under Captain Mervine to Monterey with a confidential message to Larkin, but with no orders to raise the flag. Hearing then, on June 7th, further news of the war, Sloat himself proceeded in the *Savannah* (first maneuvring, it is said, to deceive the British Admiral as to his purpose) to Monterey, where he arrived on July 2d. Here again he delayed. Larkin still wished to adhere to the old plan, which was natural as he was on most friendly terms with residents and authorities, but he failed to distinguish between California a dependency of Mexico and a booty of war, and California the former half-separated, drifting colony, peopled by those who were largely in accord with him, or who at least were not opposed to his views

of peaceful annexation to the United States. Those who thought of throwing their allegiance to Great Britain, he expected to win over, not realising, apparently, that temporising was no longer expedient. Sloat was looked to, in the certain event of the Mexican War, planned, pushed, and controlled from Washington for these many months, or even years (I do not charge with the express design of securing California, but with that object as a contingency),[1] to eliminate the California question by raising our flag before any other nation could act to American disadvantage and embarrassment. Possession would be a conclusive factor. But Sloat proceeded too cautiously. Finally he took action, and on July 7, 1846, he raised the American flag over the custom-house in Monterey, and issued a proclamation declaring California annexed to the United States. On the 9th of the same month the flag was placed over San Francisco, and also over Sonoma, there extinguishing the Bear Flag for ever, and on the 11th, it was put up over Sutter's Fort. "I received the Order," says Sutter, "to raise the flag by Sunrise from Lt. Revere, long time before daybreak, I got ready with loading the Canons and when it was day the roaring of the Canons got the people all stirring. Some of them made long faces, as they thought if the Bear Flag would remain there would be a better chance to rob and plunder."[2]

On the 8th of June, Castro had proclaimed martial law in defiance of Governor Pio Pico, and that officer was soon marching north to exact submission, but on the way learning of the capture of Sonoma by the Americans he changed his tactics, and proceeded to arrange a conference with Castro, to plan resistance to the common enemy. Sloat properly communicated with them both, in his endeavour to carry the occupation peacefully, according to his orders. Professor

[1] The Mexican War merely was a part of the compact with Texas that the United States must adhere to the claim that the Rio Grande was the western boundary of Texas, on the mistaken idea that it was part of the original Louisiana Purchase. The United States had exchanged that claim for Florida.

[2] *Sutter's Diary*, July 11th.

Royce, in his *California*, says Frémont's "conduct in the north remained effective as a serious hindrance in the way of the true conquest of California. It delayed the raising of the flag a full week after Sloat's arrival by making him uncertain how to apply his instructions to the anomalous conditions."[1] This seems to be a statement without reason except to make out a case against Frémont. Sloat's instructions were exceedingly definite and positive. On hearing of war, he was immediately to seize the Californian ports; peacefully if possible. There is no ambiguity in this, and to lay his hesitation, which was the result of adopting Larkin's views, to what the Bear Flag men and Frémont, or anyone else, had done is outside the facts. Sloat simply vacillated, fearing to repeat the Jones blunder. For a year the Mexican War, with the prospective seizure of New Mexico and California, had been imminent, and now, according to Professor Royce, Sloat failed to execute the repeated positive orders from the Navy Department to take California, because someone on land had done something else he did not quite understand!

Two days after Sloat raised the flag at Monterey, he wrote to Frémont to come as soon as possible with one hundred men accustomed to riding, to form a force to prevent further robbery by Indians. Meanwhile Frémont had visited the Mexican fort of San Joaquin (without a garrison) on the south point at the Golden Gate, by the help of an American merchant captain, whose vessel was in the Bay, and all the cannon there were spiked by one of his men, Stepp, who was a gunsmith.

The force which Frémont had with him at Sonoma consisted of one hundred and sixty men. The Fourth of July was celebrated there and the settlers were then organised into a battalion numbering two hundred and twenty-four men. This settlers' movement, Frémont states, was due to his presence, "and at any time upon my withdrawal it would

[1] *California*, by Josiah Royce, p. 161.

have collapsed with absolute ruin to the settlers." It is not so certain to me that the Captain was right in his estimate in this respect. He now returned to his main camp near Sutter's Fort, leaving Captain Grigsby in command at Sonoma. By this time Castro had evacuated his position at Santa Clara, and had begun a retreat to the Mission of San Juan, near Monterey, which, also, he later evacuated. On the evening of the 10th of July the messenger arrived at Frémont's camp from Commander Montgomery with the news of Sloat's raising the American flag over Monterey, and also that one had been raised at San Francisco, one sent to Sonoma to be raised there, and bearing one to be placed over Sutter's Fort, which was run up as already described, the next morning, with a salute of twenty-one guns.

Commodore Sloat was desirous of knowing if Frémont would co-operate with him, and on July 12th the Captain received a message from the Commodore with information as to what had been done and saying: "I am extremely anxious to see you at your earliest convenience; and should General Castro consent to enter into a capitulation, it is of the utmost importance that you should be present." Arranging affairs at Sutter's Fort, Captain Frémont, with a feeling that all opposition north of San Francisco Bay was now entirely ended, went to Monterey by way of Mission San Juan, evacuated by Castro, where he placed a small guard. Into Monterey he and his men rode, on July 19, 1846, a picturesque and striking company, making a deep impression on the officers of the British man-of-war *Collingwood* which had recently arrived. Lieutenant Walpole, of the *Collingwood*, wrote:

A vast cloud of dust appeared first, and thence in long file emerged this wildest wild party. Frémont rode ahead, a spare, active looking man, with such an eye! He was dressed in a blouse and leggings, and wore a felt hat. After him came five Delaware Indians, who were his body guard. . . . The rest, many of them blacker than the Indians, rode two and two, the

rifle held by one hand across the pommel of the saddle. . . . The dress of these men was principally a long loose coat of deer-skin, tied with thongs in front; trowsers of the same of their own manufacture. They are allowed no liquor; tea and sugar only. . . . They were marched up to an open space on the hills near the town, under some long firs, and there took up their quarters, in messes of six or seven, in the open air.[1]

Only one man according to Frémont was dressed in buck-skin; Lieutenant Walpole was romantic.

On the appearance of the British ships, Commodore Sloat had prepared to defend his position, especially as the *Collingwood* anchored between the *Savannah*, and the *Congress*, which had recently arrived, but the British Admiral, Seymour, accepted the situation and the relations were cordial.[2] He had been on the track of Sloat for some time, but that officer had eluded him and arrived at Monterey in advance. It is reported that in December of this same year Admiral Seymour met Captain Tompkins of the U. S. S. *Lexington*, at Valparaiso, and in a friendly chat said: "The Yankees were two weeks ahead of us in taking California."[3] By this time an agreement had been reached with Great Britain on the Oregon matter; the American claim had been practically admitted. A foothold in California would have been doubly advantageous for Great Britain, hence the desire to secure one.

Frémont had an interview with Commodore Sloat, and when that gentleman discovered that the Captain had not been acting under actual orders from Washington, he was

[1] *Four Years in the Pacific*, by Lieut. the Hon. Fred Walpole, R. N.

[2] Admiral Seymour contented himself by sending to Sloat a copy of his letter to the British vice-consul Forbes, in which he says, "the tenure under which the forces of the United States at present hold this province should, therefore, be regarded as a provisional occupation pending future decisions, or the issue of the contest between the United States and Mexico." *Memoirs*, p. 555.

[3] H. D. Barrows, before Historical Society of Southern California, reprinted in *N. Y. Evening Post*, June 22, 1911.

very much disturbed and "the interview terminated abruptly." The Captain was not asked for another, and nothing was done. As Frémont justly says, "hesitation was incomprehensible," but Sloat hesitated, and would take no further steps. Secretary George Bancroft was deeply annoyed by this policy and wrote to Sloat, August 13, 1846:

> In my letter of October 17, 1845, of which you acknowledge receipt on the 17th of March, 1846, referring to these instructions once more, I said further, "In the event of actual hostilities between the Mexican government and our own, you will so dispose of your whole force as to carry out most effectually the objects specified in the instructions forwarded to you from the Department in view of such a contingency." And surely there is no ambiguity in this language, your anxiety not to do wrong has led you into a most unfortunate and unwarranted inactivity.[1]

The U. S. S. *Congress* was in command of Commodore Stockton, a man of a more positive type, though probably no better officer, than Commodore Sloat, not at all afraid to take definite action. Together with Gillespie, Frémont called on him and reported his very unsatisfactory interview with Commodore Sloat, but, of course, Stockton could not express an opinion on the matter, as Sloat was his superior officer, and he so informed the Captain, who thereupon declared that he intended to make up his mind over night whether he should now return to the States, or stay in California. Stockton then requested Frémont to remain, and he revealed the fact that in a few days he was to supersede Sloat in command of the squadron, as the latter, because of ill health, desired to go home.

Frémont had his interview with Sloat just after his arrival on July 19th. On the 23d Stockton requested Commodore Sloat to immediately issue the order for the transfer of the command, as he wanted to begin preparations, but Sloat declined. He did not wish to leave at once and would

[1] Cited in *Memoirs*, p. 537.

not relinquish command till he was ready to go. He compromised, however, by placing the *Cyane* under Stockton's orders in addition to the *Congress* already under him. Stockton lost no time in communicating with Frémont and Gillespie, kindred spirits, to secure their co-operation in his plans, as well as to get them to place themselves under his authority. Frémont hesitated slightly about giving up his independence but in the interest of the general welfare he accepted the post. "Knowing," he writes, "that the men under my command would go with me, I accepted Commodore Stockton's proposal to take service under him and remain with him as long as he required my services. And I adhered to this engagement at the cost of my commission in the army."

Commodore Sloat and his policy, and Larkin as well, were now out of the reckoning. The next part in the conquest of California was about to begin.

Note:—For details of incidents on the Rio Grande, see *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major-General, U. S. A.*, Scribners, 1913, and for the Mexican War and matters connected therewith see *The United States and Mexico, 1821–1848*, by George Lockhart Rives, Scribners, 1913. Professor Rives ridicules the idea of Magoffin's connection with the Army's peaceful entrance into Santa Fé, but there seems to be excellent ground to believe in it, especially as Benton, who made the assertion, was for so many years Chairman of the Senate Military Committee, and Magoffin had been, and was, an important and influential figure in northern Mexico. We must remember, however, that Benton was not friendly to General Kearny and therefore would welcome anything to reduce his popularity. Magoffin went on to aid in the same way at Chihuahua, but was arrested there by the Mexicans.

Old Custom House in California
Monterey

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

Capture of San Diego—Los Angeles Occupied—Fall of New Mexico with Magoffin's Aid—Carson as Guide Turned Back—Insurrection at Los Angeles—The Battle of San Pascual—Killed and Wounded—A Clash of Commanders—The California Battalion—Sentence of Death on Pico—The Treaty of Couenga—Governor Frémont—A Wonderful Ride—A Challenge for a Duel—Frémont under Arrest—Death of his Mother—The Court-Martial—Dismissed from the Army.

HAVING at last taken possession of Monterey, Commodore Sloat asked General Castro to sign articles of capitulation, but that wily officer replied, from his safe camp, that his duty was to defend his country, that Sloat should communicate with the Governor and Assembly at Los Angeles for capitulation, and proceeded to take himself speedily southward. On the 29th of July, Commodore Sloat sailed for home on board the *Levant* with Commander Page. Stockton then became first in command. Appointing Rev. Walter Colton, alcalde of Monterey, Stockton prepared to move vigorously on the Mexicans at the south.[1] North of Monterey the country had been cleared of opposition by the Bear Flag forces, and Frémont's idea was to continue this method on land with the co-operation by sea of the navy. That is to say, he would have gone south by way of the settled country, enlisting on the way

[1] See *Three Years in California*, by Rev. Walter Colton, U. S. N., New York, 1859. This book is dedicated "to Gen. Mariano Guadaloupe Vallejo, one of California's distinguished sons, in whom the interests of freedom, humanity, and education have found an able advocate and munificent benefactor."

all parties in sympathy, and keeping open his line of communication with the Sacramento Valley. Arrangements previously had been made with Commander Montgomery to meet him, with the *Portsmouth*, at Santa Barbara, Montgomery being secretly favourable to this plan even before the definite news of war.

But Stockton's plan, which was the one carried out, was to move south entirely by sea, disembark where desired, and carry the country at these points. This had the disadvantage of permitting the escape into the back country of the enemy with horses, cattle, and supplies, and, therefore, compelling movements from the ships to be made on foot. Frémont's men, accustomed to independence, subjected themselves to discipline of the military kind reluctantly, and they laughed at the offer of ten dollars a month from Commodore Stockton, but they served nevertheless, expecting the Government in the end to decently compensate them. On July 25th, the *Cyane*, Captain Mervine, was ready to take them south, and the novelty of a sea voyage was looked forward to with more pleasure than was warranted by a band of mountaineers who had seldom if ever sailed the ocean blue. They were soon in the customary sad frame of mind of landsmen at sea as the ship plunged along the coast, and they paid their tribute to Neptune in the usual manner. In three days a landing was made at San Diego, where there was no opposition, Bandini, the leading citizen, and Arguello, Captain of the Port receiving them all as friends. Bandini was father-in-law to Don Abel Stearns, of Los Angeles, one of the most respected and prominent Americans in the country. While Frémont was preparing to advance on Los Angeles from this direction, Stockton came down and landed at San Pedro with 360 men, with Larkin as conciliator. Castro now sent an emissary to arrange for a suspension of hostilities, but Stockton declined to halt unless there was an agreement to raise the American flag, whereupon Castro and Governor Pio Pico,

owing to their insufficient force, left the locality after the Assembly had adjourned *sine die*. Castro headed for Sonora, while Pio Pico retired some eighteen miles to his ranch. There was no opposition, and joined by Frémont, Commodore Stockton, on August 13, 1846, entered Los Angeles and raised there the American flag. On the 17th the country was proclaimed a territory of the United States. Captain Frémont was created Military Governor on the 24th of August. The territory was divided into three districts, and Lieutenant Gillespie was appointed commandant of the Southern District with headquarters at Los Angeles, and a garrison of fifty men. All the native civil officers were permitted to remain in power and to continue their functions as before.

The conquest appeared now to be complete. Stockton wrote a letter to Frémont directing him to do all he could to further his (Stockton's) intentions, and declared that by the 25th of October he expected to meet Frémont at San Francisco and make him Governor of California. A report was prepared to send to George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, and "to insure the safety and speedy delivery of these important papers, and as a reward for brave and valuable services on many occasions," writes Frémont, "we decided to make Carson the bearer of these despatches."[1] He was to call first on Senator Benton who would introduce him to the President and Mr. Bancroft. On the way, he would pass through Taos, New Mexico, and would be able to see his family residing there. His route, according to Frémont, would be by way of the Virgin River trail, already described, no easy route, and certainly no safe one, but as Kearny met him near Socorro he must have gone by the Gila River.

Meanwhile other things were happening which had a bearing on the occurrences in California. Besides the operations against Mexico directly, General Kearny, with a considerable force, was ordered, June 3, 1846, to cross the

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 567.

Plains and conquer New Mexico and California. As yet no regular army officer (Frémont being of the Engineer Corps) had been engaged in the California doings; all was carried on by the navy with volunteers. The governor of New Mexico was Armijo, the same brute who had so horribly maltreated the Texans, and, like most of these governors, he had an eye to the main chance. He was also a coward. His chief general was another brute, Salezar; and there was a warlike Colonel Archuleta. Archuleta was for fighting the Americans, but diplomacy here interfered. An American, James Magoffin, long resident in Chihuahua, and well-known as an influential man, had been sent by the Washington authorities to avoid bloodshed, if possible, by negotiations. On the understanding, it is said, that the conquest was to stop at the east bank of the Rio Grande, and leave the west to them, these warriors with their 7000 troops consented not to oppose the American advance.[1]

General Kearny either did not understand the situation as Armijo and Archuleta are said to have understood it, or he chose to ignore it. At any rate on August 18, 1846, one day after Stockton had proclaimed California a territory of the United States, General Kearny entered the ancient town of Santa Fé without opposition, "in fine array and banners streaming in the breeze." The general took up his quarters in the "Palace," which is still standing, and proclaimed the annexation of *all* of New Mexico. Armijo fled, fearing his own people, it is said, as well as the Americans. After organising a government, Kearny, according to orders, proceeded on his way to California with three hundred dragoons of the regular army, a force which easily would have defeated any army possible for the Mexicans to pit against

[1] James Magoffin had been first consul of the U. S. at Chihuahua. He had returned and settled near Independence, Mo., and was called to Washington through Senator Benton and sent as secret agent with General Kearny. See *Doniphan's Expedition*, by Wm. E. Connelley, p. 197, and Benton's *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., pp. 682 *et seq.*

him in California. He had not proceeded many miles before he met Kit Carson (near Socorro, N. M.) on his rapid way east, having killed thirty-four mules up to this point, with the messages from Stockton and Frémont, and also one informing Kearny of the peaceful conquest of California.

General Kearny therefore concluded that his large force was not necessary, especially as the Mormon Battalion, under Cooke, was to follow him. He sent back all but one hundred dragoons with which he proceeded, and, realising the difficult nature of the country, he directed Carson to turn about and act as his guide, while Fitzpatrick should proceed in his stead to Washington with the messages.[1] Carson acquiesced reluctantly. Senator Benton, Captain Frémont, and Commodore Stockton, made much of this incident later, in their opposition to Kearny, and conveyed the impression that the forwarding of the despatches by another than Carson had endangered their safe delivery. They endeavoured to make it appear that General Kearny was derelict in the matter, but as we have seen by the preceding pages, the man to whom he entrusted the carriage of the despatches was no novice in frontier life, and was at least the equal of Carson in almost every respect. He was absolutely faithful, resolute, and resourceful; consequently the only thing to be regretted was Carson's disappointment at not seeing his family and Washington at this time, and there appears to be no justice in condemning Kearny's action.

It so happened that in neither the case of New Mexico, nor of California, was the occupation to be accomplished so easily as at first seemed to be the fact. The dragoons Kearny sent back were valuable in New Mexico in the outbreak which Archuleta fomented as soon as he discovered that he had no chance to hold the country beyond the Rio Grande, but they would have been of even greater service

[1] As noted Carson had not come by the Rio Virgin route but by the Gila, a new way which Fitzpatrick had not been over. It was necessary therefore to have Carson for guide.

in California when Kearny arrived there to unexpectedly encounter the only determined opposition of the entire conquest.

Commodore Stockton, leaving Frémont at Los Angeles, where Gillespie was now directly in charge, went by sea up to Yerba Buena, San Francisco. In a few days Frémont also departed from Los Angeles and marched north by way of the Mission of San Fernando, and other settled places, under the guidance of William Knight, sounding the American settlers as to their attitude towards enlisting in a battalion which Stockton desired to organise for a movement on Mexico. On the way he received a note of inquiry about this from Commodore Stockton, dated September 28th, but circumstances which took place four days before the date of the letter compelled a sudden change in all plans.

Gillespie, as commandant at Los Angeles, it is said, was too tyrannical and there was an insurrection, the Flores revolt. Some of Castro's officers took command of Los Angeles, and Gillespie could do nothing with his small force but accept the Mexicans' generous offer to permit him and his troops to depart with honours of war. He marched to San Pedro, where, the Mexicans charged, "devoid of shame, good faith, and word of honour," he prolonged his stay on the *Vandalia*, a merchant vessel, waiting for the arrival of a warship in answer to a message he sent to Stockton.[1] This was carried by a rider ferociously pursued by Mexicans who shot his horse; but, nevertheless, he made *five hundred miles in five days*, and reached Yerba Buena the evening of the 29th. Immediately, the *Savannah*, Captain Mervine, with 350 men, and a transport with Frémont and 160 men, and Stockton in his own vessel the *Congress*, started to Gillespie's relief. Two days before this Frémont

[1] For the Gillespie–Flores articles of capitulation, see p. 493, and for summary of correspondence between them p. 494, of Richman's *California under Spain and Mexico*. It seems likely that the Mexicans merely took advantage of opportunity.

had arrived from the south, with 170 men, his last stage being by boats under Midshipman Edward Beale who had been sent to look for him by Commodore Stockton, and of whom we shall hear more. Several offers of Americans to join the forces were declined on the ground that they were not needed, Stockton believing his present force sufficient.[1]

The Commodore, separated in a fog from the *Stirling*, on which was Frémont, proceeded to San Pedro, while Frémont, learning from the *Vandalia*, that no horses could be had below, debarked at Monterey, where he could procure them, to go down by land. Captain Mervine, reaching San Pedro first, landed part of his crew to work with Gillespie's men. These forces marched towards Los Angeles, but they were soon valiantly met by a large company of Mexicans on horseback who operated a single field piece so rapidly and skilfully that four of Mervine's men were killed, while six were wounded, in an action lasting an hour. Mervine then withdrew. The Mexicans being well-mounted, and the Americans on foot, the latter could not keep up with the movements of the enemy. Other Americans had been previously defeated in a skirmish, twenty-five miles east of Los Angeles at Chino Ranch.

Stockton now found it extremely difficult to secure horses, or cattle, or fresh provisions, the Mexicans keeping everything well out of the way. If Frémont's original plan of campaign had been followed, there would, by this time, have been a line of established communication through to the Sacramento Valley, but Stockton did not so well appreciate the value of horses. As it was, a vessel was sent for supplies to Lower California on the supposition that the news of war had not yet penetrated there.

Meanwhile November, 1846, was passing and the situation did not look promising for the immediate success of the American arms. The Mexicans re-established themselves in Los Angeles, their governmental city, while Stockton was

[1] Bryant, *What I Saw in California.*

vainly endeavouring to secure enough horses to move his men against them. By this time General Kearny with his hundred dragoons reached the border of the settlements, at Warner's Ranch, almost without supplies after the long dry march, with his men and horses worn out, and notified Stockton of his arrival by a letter dated December 2, 1846, in which he requested that Stockton should send a party to open communication, and tell him how things now stood. Stockton sent Gillespie, now a captain, with a detachment of marines and volunteers, forty in number, utilising all the best mounts, and these none too good. Midshipman Beale, Captain Gibson of the California Battalion, and Alexis Godey, who had been made a lieutenant, accompanied him. There was also a Mexican from the enemy's camp to act as guide in case an attack, recommended by Stockton, should be planned, and Stokes, an Englishman who had brought the message to Stockton, and who went back as a neutral spectator.

Gillespie met Kearny, December 5th, in the afternoon, between Santa Maria and Santa Ysabel. The enemy, not aware of Kearny's presence, but planning against Gillespie, were near San Pascual, which was not far from the present town of Ramona, north-east of San Diego. In the grey morning of December 6th, as they drew near San Pascual, Captain Johnston, by order, with only twenty men, charged in advance the Mexican camp (which had been reconnoitred) in an attempt to surprise them. He was killed. The Mexicans were unprepared but acted quickly. Kearny, with all but the rear-guard, then swept down on the retreating enemy, who suddenly halted and executed a counter-attack using their long lances against the American sabres with deadly results. Captain Moore and sixteen others were killed, which, with Johnston, made eighteen lost at this time, while Kearny, Warner, Gillespie, and sixteen more were wounded, Lieutenant Hammond so dangerously that he died later. The mules attached to one of the howitzers ran away

with it into the enemy's ranks where they were captured and the man in charge killed, the gun being carried away.

Godey was at once sent with a message for Stockton, from Captain Turner, in command as Kearny was wounded, but Godey was captured on his return, and the Kearny camp not knowing what had occurred sent out Kit Carson, Lieutenant Beale, and an Indian, to make another attempt. They got through, by the exercise of great skill and caution. Stockton had been much surprised to learn from Godey that Carson, who was supposed to be on his way to Washington, was with Kearny, and he was angry to learn from Carson himself, when he came, that his orders had been superseded. This was the beginning of the notorious disagreement between Stockton and Frémont on one side, and General Kearny on the other. As Kearny was killed in battle in Mexico the next year, the other side had it all their own way after that, and they and their friends, ably seconded by eloquent denunciations from Senator Benton, seldom lost a chance to denounce Kearny, who in some respects was open to criticism. Even writing in 1886, when Kearny had been in his grave four decades, Frémont, in his *Memoirs*, still expresses deep resentment that Kearny not only should have prevented Carson from continuing with the despatches, but that in the note written from Warner's Ranch he merely had said he met him. Frémont called this duplicity and said that "it showed, with the clearness of light, the quality which was at the root of his character—a falseness which contaminated every other quality." Others did not find General Kearny quite so despicable. He appears to have been a real soldier who did his duty. The Carson incident was trivial. Fitzpatrick, as before remarked, was quite as efficient, and Carson was necessary for the proper advance of Kearny's force.

Lieutenant Gray and two hundred sailors and marines from Stockton's army arrived December 11th to aid Kearny, and the next day the entire body was at San Diego. Here

were now two commanders and two forces united, which were to operate for the same object. Commodore Stockton was the ranking officer on the sea, General Kearny on land. Stockton says that he tendered to Kearny the position of commander-in-chief and offered to accompany him as aid.

> This offer [says Frémont] was a few days afterward formally repeated in presence of all the officers that could be spared from duty, and again declined. Commodore Stockton wished Kearney to understand that he was willing to waive all question of the right to the chief command, in the circumstances, and give all power into his hands. Subsequently, and while still at San Diego, General Kearney intimated to Stockton that he thought that he [Kearny] ought to be governor of the territory, under his instructions.[1]

General Kearny had come to San Diego wounded, some of his best men killed, his force exhausted from the long march and the battle. It was no time for him to assert himself. He knew what his instructions were and that when the proper time came his position would be properly established.

Stockton claimed to have already inaugurated civil government except in two places, and that everything was accomplished. He intended to appoint Major Frémont governor, and Captain Gillespie secretary. "The refusal to recognise his claim to be governor rankled in Kearny's mind and guided his conduct," remarks Frémont.[2]

While all these things were happening Frémont was actively engaged, in the neighbourhood of Monterey, in raising more troops; and there he received news, October 27th, of his appointment as Lieutenant-Colonel of a rifle regiment in the army. A body of Mexicans under Manuel Castro was discovered ranging that region and they captured Larkin who was on his way to San Francisco. He was

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 589.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 590.

not injured though often threatened and at a later date was released.[1] Colonel Frémont departed from Monterey on his way to Los Angeles, and halted at the Mission San Juan Bautista[2], where he scoured the country in search of Manuel Castro and his soldiers, but failed to find them. They remained at San Juan till the end of November waiting for reinforcements "from the [Sacramento] valley" and then began the movement to the south to unite with the force there which was planning for the recovery of Los Angeles. He had some 428 men, including Indians. In collecting these men Frémont was materially aided by several residents, among them Edwin Bryant who went to New Helvetia (Sutter's Fort) for more recruits. He arrived after some very strenuous travel by horse and boat through stormy weather, just after Frémont's special agent had departed with about sixty men who had gathered there. Bryant requested Captain Sutter and Edward Kern to send *among the Indians*(!) for recruits to be used as spies and scouts, and this was done. Eight white men coming from the east recently, and who had been enrolled at another settlement, came to Sutter's Fort at this time, and together with Bryant they started to join Frémont, picking up about thirty Indians on the way. These were some of the same Indians, apparently, who had been supposed to be endeavouring to burn the settlers' crops earlier in the war. There seemed now to be no question of their loyalty to the Americans.[3] "The chiefs," says Bryant, "and some of the

[1] The story of Larkin's trials is most interesting but limits of space prohibit even extracts here. See *Out West Magazine*, vol. xxiii., p. 234 *et seq.* for a reprint from *The Californian* of Feb. 27, 1847.

[2] Many of the missions, among them San Juan, were deserted by this time, owing to adverse legislation. A small village still remained.

[3] Upham in his *Life of John Charles Fremont*, p. 242, tells of Frémont's going, about this time, with three picked men into the camp of the Wallawalla Indians who were said to be planning an attack on the settlements. Instead of fighting they "gathered around him to tell their wrongs. They had been robbed, and one of their best young men killed by the whites." He pacified

warriors of these parties were partially clothed, but most of them were naked, except a small garment around the loins. They were armed with bows and arrows." Again it is discovered that the Indian was not as bad or intractable as he was painted. On November 29th, with this singular company, Bryant arrived and reported to Colonel Frémont at the mission of San Juan Bautista.

The force under Colonel Frémont was styled the California Battalion, the nucleus of it being the men of his third "scientific" expedition who had been so carefully trained on the way out, not in reading the stars, but in hitting the bull's eye; a training which now came in so opportunely. Their dress was thus described:

> A broad-brimmed low-crowned hat, a shirt of blue flannel, or buckskin, with pantaloons and moccasins of the same, all generally much the worse for wear, and smeared with mud and dust, make up the costume of the party, officers as well as men. A leathern girdle surrounds the waist, from which are suspended a bowie and a hunter's knife, and sometimes a brace of pistols. These with the rifle and holster pistols are the arms carried by officers and privates. A single bugle (and a sorry one it is) composes the band.[1]

Another man who helped Frémont considerably at this time was William Swasey of Monterey, a "young American of education and handsome presence," consular secretary to Larkin. On November 30th the Battalion started from San Juan and moved ten miles where a halt was made while a party went back after cattle, appearing with one hundred head the afternoon of the first day of December. The march was not a pleasure journey as may easily be understood. The supply of cattle was soon used up, for it takes a large amount of meat to keep four hundred and more

them and promised redress. They sent ten of their young men for service with him.

[1] Bryant, *What I Saw in California*, p. 366. Bryant gives the names of the officers of the Battalion.

hungry trampers and riders, and they had to "live on the country," not easy there for so large a party. Whatever was taken was always receipted for, and the United States eventually was to foot the bills. The value (estimated afterwards by an appointed board of officers) for all supplies taken during Frémont's operations was "appropriated by Congress and paid to the respective owners. Sutter also was paid for the use of his fort."[1]

Through rain, and mud, and half starved, the Battalion, so splendid in devotion and courage, went on south, over the mountains instead of by the roads.[2] Bryant, in his admirable book, gives the itinerary, and it is certain that if senators and representatives had experienced but a single day of it, or of any other part of Frémont's operations, his subsequent treatment would have been vastly more sympathetic. Probably no man, whose services have been so conspicuous and so valuable to the United States, was ever so contemptuously treated by the Government and by numerous unfriendly critics, most of whom would not have given up a single hour of their comfortable firesides to follow his arduous tracks.

With all the temptations of these hungry, half-clad, tentless, members of the California Battalion, they were careful not to impose on the inhabitants, and Bryant remarks: "No military party ever passed through an enemy's country and observed the same strict regard for the rights of its population. I never heard of an outrage, or even a 'trespass' being committed by one of the American volunteers during our entire march." This is something to be proud of, and I would specially direct to this the attention of those gentlemen who have more or less cast slurs on such men because they did not wash every hour

[1] *Memoirs*, footnote p. 526.

[2] Frémont was censured for taking this out-of-the-way route, but it seems to have been justified by the necessity for caution and his lack of knowledge of the power of the enemy.

(through no fault of their own). Also they might note the fact that Frémont was, at least partly, responsible for this excellent bearing of his company. Many of the Mexicans who had been released on parole broke the parole and there was much condemnation of them for this failure to adhere to their promise. Larkin says: "Four-fifths of the Mexican and Californian officers, who had given Commodore Stockton their written parole, broke it and took up arms."[1] Among these was Don Jesus Pico, a cousin of the governor Pio Pico and of Andreas Pico, who was now heading the "insurrection" in this region. On December 15th the Battalion reached the Mission San Luis Obispo in the darkness of night and took possession. In order not to disturb the people, the church was opened and used for barracks, a constant guard being set to prevent any robbery or desecration of the chancel and other valuables. Some beans, pumpkins, and pounded wheat, found in the village, were appropriated and distributed among the men; "delicacies of no common order," exclaims Bryant.

About thirty of the enemy were captured in the neighbourhood, one of them being the Don Jesus Pico who had broken his parole. A court-martial was convened in the morning and its verdict was that Pico should be shot at noon. As he was about to be led out, the door of Frémont's quarters opened and Dick Owens, the trapper and scout, whom Frémont admired greatly, entered with a handsome lady in black followed by several children—the family of the condemned man—and some ladies of the village. The lady dropped on her knees imploring pardon for her husband, saying he did not know that he was committing so great a crime; the children cried, and Owens, Swasey, and several other officers added their opinion that Pico, who meanwhile had been brought in, was ignorant of the laws of war. "After a moment of hesitation," says Swasey, "Frémont turned toward the prisoner. 'I had,' he said, 'rather meet a thousand

[1] Larkin's *Account* reprinted in *Out West*, vol. xxiii.

in the field to-morrow. I pardon you. You are free!'"[1] Frémont himself writes: "'You were about to die, but your wife has saved you. Go thank her.' He fell on his knees, made on his fingers the sign of the cross, and said: 'I was to die—I had lost the life God gave me—you have given me another life. I devote the new life to you.' And he did it faithfully."[2] He accompanied Frémont on the march and was with him till he left California.

All prisoners were released and the Battalion continued southward to Santa Barbara where they were encamped by December 27th. Bryant gives a vivid description of their hard travelling on Christmas day:

> The rain fell in torrents and the wind blew almost with the force of a tornado. . . . Driving our horses before us we were compelled to slide down the steep and slippery rocks, or wade through deep gullies and ravines filled with mud and foaming torrents of water, that rushed downwards with such force as to carry along the loose rocks and tear up the trees and shrubbery by the roots. Many of the horses falling into the ravines refused to make an effort to extricate themselves, and were swept downwards and drowned. Others, bewildered by the fierceness and terrors of the storm, rushed or fell headlong over the steep precipices and were killed. Others obstinately refused to proceed, but stood quaking with fear or shivering with cold, and many of these perished in the night from the severity of the storm . . . and a night of more impenetrable and terrific darkness I never witnessed.[3]

At Santa Barbara, Frémont was visited by an elderly lady, Señora Bernarda Ruiz, who wished to use her influence to put an end to the war on terms that would make lasting peace. She could influence her people, she said, and begged Frémont to stay proceedings till she could act. Frémont, under every circumstance a gentleman, listened attentively

[1] Cited by Richman, *California*, p. 328.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 599.
[3] *What I Saw in California*, Bryant, p. 380.

to all she had to advance, and finally assured her that, when the occasion came, he would bear in mind her wishes, and that "she might speak on this basis to her friends. Here began the Capitulation of Couenga."[1]

On January 3, 1847, the march was resumed and the Battalion passed down the coast to the "Rincon," a passage between two points along a narrow shore and beach, about fifteen miles long, an excellent place for the Mexicans to attack the army, and it was expected that trouble would come there, but the precaution of having a gunboat escort prevented it. Camping on the 5th of January at the Mission of San Buenaventura, a small party of the enemy was observed, but a shot or two from the field pieces dispersed them. The next day a larger force hovered about, retreating before the advance of the Battalion, the horses of the latter being so feeble that pursuit was out of the question. On the 9th Captain Hamlyn arrived with a message from Stockton, cautioning Frémont to keep his men close together and if possible not to fight till he (Stockton) could join him. On the 11th an advance party, in which was Edwin Bryant, met two Mexicans riding in great haste. They were from the Mission of San Fernando bearing the information that the Mexican forces had been defeated by General Kearny and Commodore Stockton and that the Pueblo (or Ciudad as it was beginning to be styled) de los Angeles was again in the hands of the Americans. They wanted to see Frémont and were taken to him. Colonel Frémont does not mention this incident in his *Memoirs*, nor does he mention that a Frenchman a little later the same day came along with a letter from Kearny at Los Angeles, confirming the previous information.

Camp was made at the Mission of San Fernando, which was the home of Andreas Pico the commander of the opposing forces, and the latter had arrived and were stationed about two miles off. A couple of weeks before this, Stockton

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 600.

and Kearny had moved on Los Angeles, and on the first day of January near San Luis Rey, they were met by an offer of truce which was not accepted and the army of six hundred Americans continued to San Juan Capistrano, where amnesty was offered to all who had not broken their parole. Proceeding the Americans were met by an army of five hundred men under Flores, Andreas Pico, and José Antonio Carillo. The Mexicans had miserable powder, made in the country, and their bullets were ineffective. The Americans forded the San Gabriel River in the face of this rather feeble defence, and once they were on the other side, the enemy retired before them. Following this the opposition was not determined and, with a contest for a brief time at the Cañada de los Alisos, the enemy gave up the defence of Los Angeles, and the Americans on January 10, 1847, marched into the town, four months after Gillespie had been compelled to evacuate it.

The news of this triumph, as noted, reached Frémont the following day, the 11th of January, at the Mission of San Fernando. The fleeing Mexican (or Californian) army was ready now to treat for peace. A well-armed force equal in numbers was behind them, and another well-armed, keen-shooting force, almost their equal in numbers, was ready before them. There was therefore little choice of action, and when Frémont sent Jesus Pico to talk to his cousin Andreas Pico and urge a peaceful surrender on liberal terms, he was met with a prompt, affirmative response. The next morning Colonel Frémont rode to their camp and himself conferred with Andreas Pico when the important features of the surrender were agreed upon. A truce was ordered, commissioners appointed, and on January 13, 1847, Colonel Frémont and the Commissioners, at a deserted ranch at the foot of Couenga plain, drew up and signed the articles of capitulation known as the Treaty of Couenga. The brass howitzer, captured by the Mexicans at the battle of San Pascual, owing to the stampede of the mules pulling it, was

here returned. In a letter of Stockton's he refers to the capitulation as having been made by Frémont without knowing what had occurred (at Los Angeles), but by Bryant, an accurate writer, it is evident that news of the capture of Los Angeles and the rout of the Mexicans reached the Frémont camp the day after the occurrence. Neither Stockton nor Frémont mentions this fact.[1]

The Frémont Battalion, now having nothing further to do at Couenga (or Cahuenga), proceeded to Los Angeles, where they arrived January 14th. Frémont, having pledged his services originally to Stockton, first waited upon him as governor and commander-in-chief, and a little later he called on General Kearny. That painful episode of the conquest, the controversy between Kearny on the one hand, and Stockton and Frémont on the other, was growing. The question involved was a technical military question; namely as to which officer was actually *commander-in-chief of all the forces*—Kearny or Stockton. Kearny had received special orders to conquer California and establish a government. So, claimed Stockton, had he, and he also claimed that Kearny's instructions were obsolete, that they never would have been given if the Government had anticipated that the entire country would have been conquered and held, as it was, by himself. He maintained also, that had it not been for his help, Kearny would not have been able to escape at the battle of San Pascual, but he did not state that but for the mistaken news of the establishment of peace in California, Kearny would have had with him two hundred more well-equipped dragoons, and that with this force the Mexicans would have been unable to compete.

Stockton's first contention, that the Government would not have given the order it gave to Kearny had it understood

[1] Bigelow in his *Memoir of John Charles Fremont* states that had it not been for this treaty a predatory warfare would have run on for an indefinite time, but there is little evidence of this. The Mexicans were quite as ready to stop as the Americans were to have them.

the situation, was an admission that Kearny's orders were actually paramount, as indeed they were later in date than Stockton's. His second contention, that he had conquered California before Kearny's arrival, is not borne out by the facts, as the only real battle of the whole conquest was fought by Kearny quite unexpectedly, with jaded men and horses, and therefore at a disadvantage. Had he been expecting a warlike reception, he certainly would have halted for recuperation, before plunging into the fray. For many reasons he had waived the question of authority till after the settlement of the war, but now he again took up the subject, and insisted on the recognition of his supremacy. The conquest had been largely accomplished in the second stage; all resistance of any consequence occurred after Kearny was on the ground.

Stockton maintained that he was as independent of Kearny as Kearny was of him and that the California Battalion, which he had raised and organised, rightfully subject to his orders, was independent of General Kearny; that Kearny at any time had the power to direct Frémont to leave Stockton's command, and report to him for orders. Perhaps the trouble actually lay in the indefiniteness of the instructions from the seat of government. At any rate it was a technical question. Frémont decided to stand by Stockton with whom he had been advantageously working in complete harmony, and by whom he was named for governor, and he therefore refused to submit, when on January 16, 1847, Brigadier-General Kearny, directed him to suspend execution of orders received from Commodore Stockton.[1] The Colonel replied by letter that he had found Stockton in possession of the country as early as July, 1846,

[1] General Sherman in his *Memoirs* says General Kearny was regarded as the rightful commander, though Frémont issued orders in defiance of him; but Sherman was a West Point lieutenant at that time and in connection with Frémont there is no doubt that the testimony of West Point men is somewhat prejudiced. I have arrived at this conclusion very reluctantly.

received from him a commission, and he continued, "I feel, therefore, with great deference to your professional and personal character, constrained to say that, until you and Commodore Stockton adjust between yourselves the question of rank, where I respectfully think the difference belongs, I shall have to report and receive orders, as heretofore, from the Commodore." The letter, of which this was an important part, General Kearny advised Frémont to take back and destroy, saying that he was willing to forget it, and feeling that it would be ruinous to Frémont's career, but the counsel was not heeded. The young Colonel was apparently right in the matter, but subordinate officers are not expected or permitted in military discipline to instruct their superiors. The orders from the Secretary of War to Kearny read: "These troops, and such as may be organised in California, will be under your command," which was called to the attention of Frémont, but he nevertheless decided to adhere to Stockton as his commander-in-chief under the circumstances, the theory being that technically he and his California Battalion had been and still were in the naval service, under Stockton.[1]

For a period of about fifty days, from January 16, 1847, Colonel Frémont was recognised everywhere in California as Governor, under Stockton's appointment. Kearny went up to Monterey, and in March Frémont thought he had discovered signs of another outbreak which he believed should be immediately reported to the General. H. H. Bancroft declares: "These alarms were invented later as an excuse for disobeying Kearny's orders."[2] But it seems somewhat unreasonable to suppose that Frémont would make such a tremendous effort as he did in the long ride to be described, merely to inaugurate, or cover up, insubordination. At the

[1] The famous Mormon Battalion came in about this time under Colonel P. St. John Cooke, via New Mexico. See Cooke's book *The Conquest of New Mexico and California.* Putnam's, 1878.

[2] H. H. Bancroft, *Pacific States*, vol. xxii., p. 442.

same time one may ask, "Why was it necessary for him to carry the news in person?" He writes, "I made a most extraordinary ride to give information to prevent an insurrection. The only thing, it would seem, that I came for in that interview, was to insult General Kearny, and to offer my resignation; and he [pretends he] does not even know what I went for. Certainly the public service, to say nothing of myself as an officer, required a different kind of reception from the one I received."[1]

The immediate trouble seems partly to have arisen from General Kearny's insisting that Colonel Mason should remain through the interview, on the ground that he was the officer appointed to succeed to command in California after the approaching departure of General Kearny. The situation was antagonistic. Kearny finally gave Frémont a limited time in which to declare himself as to obeying the General's orders, and after an hour's consideration he returned agreeing to obey. He was then directed to report at Monterey at the earliest possible moment. Of the impending insurrection at Los Angeles nothing more is heard.[2]

The great ride which culminated at Monterey in this unsatisfactory interview was one of the most remarkable on record for speed and distance. Few men would have the endurance necessary to accomplish such a feat, but Frémont was a man of iron. At dawn, March 22, 1847, he rode out of Los Angeles accompanied by his devoted friend Don Jesus Pico, like all Californians of that day a superb horseman full of endurance, and by the equally devoted coloured man Jacob Dodson, now, by his long experience, the equal of a Californian in riding and lasso-throwing. Besides their

[1] Frémont's Defence. See also *Bigelow's Life*, p. 395.

[2] The cause of the possible insurrection was the approach of the Mormon Battalion, the issuing of proclamations incompatible with the treaty of Cahuenga, and several other things. See Frémont's Defence—Bigelow's *Life*, p. 287.

three mounts they drove before them six other horses in good condition, all unshod, and from time to time (about every twenty miles), Dodson or Pico would rope fresh horses from the free band to relieve the tired mounts. Changing saddles was but the work of a few seconds, and off they sped again. By night of this first day they had made 120 miles, over mountains and valleys, part of the way by the Rincon, the precarious path along the coast, possible only at low tide, and they slept beyond Santa Barbara at the ranch of Señor Robberis. The second day the distance covered was 135 miles, over the mountains where the Battalion had been so furiously beaten down by the terrible storm described by Bryant, and they counted the skeletons of fifty horses that had succumbed on that day of exposure and suffering.

Sunset found them at Captain Dana's place taking supper; and the home of Pico, San Luis Obispo, was reached by nine in the night. Here a warm welcome met Frémont for his clemency to Pico in the matter of the parole, and it was eleven o'clock the next morning before they were again in the saddle, with eight fresh horses and a Spanish boy for herder, and riding for Monterey. Seventy miles to their credit brought them to a halt for the night in the valley of the Salinas, where they were barred from sleep by a number of grizzly bears prowling near and frightening the horses. Frémont was for shooting them but Pico said no, and he shouted at them something in Spanish when they forthwith retired! But a large fire was then built, breakfast was prepared, and at break of day the last stretch of the road to Monterey was taken at a fine pace, the ninety miles being covered by three in the afternoon (March 25th) making a grand total in *four days of 420 miles*. Frémont, that evening, had the interview, with General Kearny, above referred to, which H. H. Bancroft regards as the "turning point" in the Kearny–Frémont affair. The next day, at four in the afternoon, the party started on the return to Los Angeles and they made 40 miles. The following day 120

miles more were put between them and Monterey, and with 130 miles then on each of the two succeeding days, the Colonel and his companions rode into Los Angeles on the ninth day after his start from there; a total journey of 840 miles over rough country in 76 actual riding hours by the use of 17 horses. To test one of them Frémont rode him without change for 130 miles in 24 hours. The famous ride from Ghent to Aix, immortalised by Browning, was barely more than the least one of these eight days of Frémont. Browning missed an opportunity. Riding with a herd of loose horses running ahead from which the lasso any moment can bring one a fresh mount is highly exhilarating. I tried it once, with 25 horses, for some 300 miles across Utah, but I was not bent on saving Aix or even Los Angeles.

Another excitement about this time was a difference which arose between Frémont and Colonel Mason. Mason's presence at the Monterey interview with Kearny had been distasteful to Frémont, and at Los Angeles the latter resented the commands of Mason concerning some horses which Frémont had been ordered to produce, whereupon Mason is reported to have exclaimed: "None of your insolence, or I will put you in irons." Frémont concluded that Mason was trying to force him into a challenge, and this accordingly followed under date of April 14, 1847. But Mason had to go to Monterey about that time and Kearny, learning the situation, forbade the duel in a letter to each of the principals which stated that "the necessity of preserving tranquillity in California, imperiously requires that the meeting above referred to should not take place at this time, and in this country, and you are hereby officially directed to proceed no further in this matter." The duel, therefore, did not come off at this, or any other time, through a series of adverse, but fortunate, occurrences. Frémont and his friends then charged that Mason was trying to avoid a meeting, though originally they ascribed to him a fierce desire for a duel. Mason was an able officer of fine character,

and it is not likely that he either sought or evaded the duel in the beginning.[1]

New instructions were presently received from Washington by both Stockton and Kearny, which unequivocally settled the matter of superiority in favour of Kearny. Stockton was instructed to relinquish the entire control to Colonel Mason or to General Kearny, "if the latter arrive before you have done so," and Kearny was directed to employ Colonel Frémont "in such manner as will render his services most available to the public interest" in case he desired to remain. Frémont, however, now that his hopes and desires had been thwarted, wished to return to the States at his own expense without waiting for anyone, as he believed he could travel more quickly, but permission to do this was withheld, and he was ordered to join Kearny with his topographical corps for the return trip which Kearny informed him would begin at Sutter's on the 16th of June, his letter from camp near that place being dated the 14th. Frémont was already at Sutter's.

John Bigelow states that Frémont was treated on this overland journey with deliberate disrespect, though the Colonel did not travel directly with Kearny.[2] Accompanied by William N. Loker and nineteen of the men of his third expedition, and some servants, he kept apart, making separate camps each night. The route was over Donner Pass, and there Kearny directed the burial of the remains of some of the unfortunate Donner party which had met disaster, as previously noted, in the winter of 1846–47. By the middle of July they passed Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail, Frémont's position a contrast to that on his former visit. Bigelow says:

[1] For the letters exchanged in this affair see Bigelow's *Life of Frémont*, pp. 205 *et seq.*

[2] For a statement in favour of General Kearny, see *General Stephen W. Kearny and the Conquest of California* (1846–7), a paper read before the Historical Society of S. California, Feb. 6, 1911, by Valentine Mott Porter, Vice-Pres. Missouri Histor. Soc., Los Angeles, *Annual Pubs. of the Hist. Soc. of S. Calif.*, vol. viii., 1911.

His achievements and rapid promotion had awakened the jealousy of certain sordid hearts and narrow minds, and like Columbus, instead of being permitted to continue his researches in the vast region which he had first brought within the reach of science, he was required to come home and defend himself from the attacks of men who had just sense enough to envy his successes without the ability to achieve them.[1]

There can be no doubt that the treatment he was now to receive was an irreparable setback to the brilliant career of Frémont. Had the "mutiny" matter been more lightly treated, as it easily could have been, he would have continued under government auspices the admirable explorations and surveys he had so auspiciously inaugurated. But the Fates willed it otherwise; they continually dashed the cup of success from his lips. On August 22d, the two cavalcades reached Fort Leavenworth, and here Kearny ordered Frémont to arrange all his affairs, which being performed he "will consider himself under arrest, and will repair to Washington City and report himself to the Adjutant-General of the Army." Proceeding under arrest, he briefly halted in St. Louis where a public dinner was tendered him by the citizens. Under the circumstances he was forced to decline, and he continued on his way to Washington where he arrived the 16th of September, 1847. Learning of the serious illness of his mother he secured leave of absence, and hastened south. Again the Fates were unkind to him. He was too late. His mother died at Aiken, South Carolina, a few hours before he reached her home.

The citizens of Charleston purchased a specially designed and elaborately wrought sword and presented it to Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont as a "memorial of their high appreciation of the gallantry and science he has displayed in his services in Oregon and California." A gold mounted belt was presented by the ladies of the city.

[1] *Life of Frémont*, p. 214.

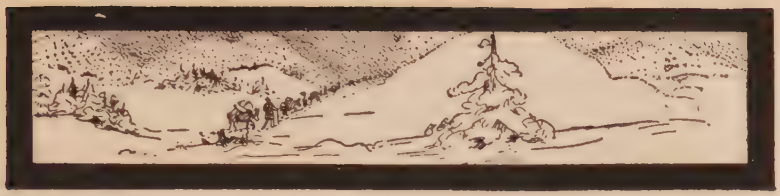
On leaving Washington he had paused long enough to write (September 17th) to the Adjutant-General saying among other things:

I wish a full trial and a speedy one. The charges against me by Brigadier-General Kearny, and the subsidiary accusations made against me in newspapers when I was not in this country, impeach me in all the departments of my conduct (military, civil, political, and moral) while in California, and, if true, would subject me to be cashiered and shot under the rules and articles of war, and to infamy in public opinion. It is my intention to meet these charges in all their extent.[1]

On the 2d day of November, 1847, the trial began. Captain John F. Lee, of the Ordnance Department, was appointed judge-advocate, and Senator Benton and William Carey Jones conducted the defence. Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont was charged with: (1) Mutiny from January 17, 1847, to the 9th day of May following, both dates inclusive; (2) disobedience of the lawful command of a superior officer; and (3) conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. Before the Court Frémont declared: "I consider these difficulties in California to be a comedy—(very near being a tragedy)—of three errors: *first*, in the faulty order sent out from this place; *next*, in the unjustifiable pretensions of General Kearny; *thirdly*, in the conduct of the government in sustaining these pretensions, and the last of these errors I consider the greatest of the three." On the 31st day of January, 1848, the court rendered a verdict of guilty on each and all of the charges, and Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont of the Mounted Rifles, U. S. A., was sentenced to dismissal from the army.[2]

[1] *Life of Frémont*, Bigelow, p. 218.

[2] For details of the trial, see, U. S. Adjutant-General's Office, *Proceedings of the General Court-Martial in the Case of Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont, 1847*, Washington, 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Ex. Doc. 33. Also John Bigelow's *Life of Frémont*, pp. 222 *et seq.*



CHAPTER XVII

THE FOURTH EXPEDITION

Asking too much of the Colonel—Justice Blind—Reinstatement and Resignation—The Map and the Geographical Memoir—Frémont versus Wilkes—A Railway to the Pacific—The Great Event of 1848—Marshall and his Gold at Sutter's Mill—Organising the Fourth Expedition—The March into Winter—Snow and Famine—A Hundred Mules Lost—Alas for the Men!—Starvation and Death—Disaster—Frémont Reaches Taos.

JUSTICE is well represented blind! Even with one eye open at this court-martial, never could she have arrived at the decision to summarily dismiss from the army of the United States, on a technicality created by a difference of opinion between two of his superior officers, the young, brilliant, indefatigable, efficient, and devoted Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont. Four of the officers of the court afterwards admitted "that the oldest officer in the army would have been puzzled how to act on the question which Mr. Frémont had been called upon by his superior officers to decide for them—the question of the relative rank between a Commodore and a General."[1]

If the American people have tears to shed over this injustice, they should let them fall belated upon the grave at Piermont.

"Answer you, Sirs? Do I understand aright?
Have patience! In this sudden smoke from hell,
So things disguise themselves,—I cannot see
My own hand held thus broad before my face
And know it again."[2]

[1] *A Year of American Travel*, by Jessie Benton Frémont, p. 115.
[2] Robert Browning, *The Ring and the Book; Caponsacchi.*

A reprimand would have been proper; Frémont had not refused to act, but simply declined to acknowledge that a General had authority over the Commodore to whom he had pledged himself long before the General appeared on the scene, and it would seem that these technical charges more concerned the superiors than they did Frémont, the victim. Furthermore, General Kearny stated that he had brought but one charge, that of mutiny; that the additional two charges were supplied by others.[1] By whom then, for what reason, and by what right were these added? Was it a deliberate attempt to break the success of Frémont by the West Point element as so often charged by Senator Benton? Regretfully I admit, it looks uncomfortably that way. Nothing creates enemies within a profession like success and Frémont had been highly successful up to this point and undoubtedly had evoked jealousy. Benton exclaimed: "He had not only entered the army intrusively, according to their ideas, that is to say, without passing through West Point, but he had done worse: he had become distinguished."[2] He was a Lieutenant-Colonel at thirty-two! and one of the most widely known officers in the American army.

The majority of the court, realising apparently that the sentence was not exactly right, added to the record some signed documents recommending clemency on account of the "distinguished professional services of the accused previous to the transactions for which he has been tried." Having swung the club they were not unwilling to put a very small plaster on the bruise. The President declined to confirm the verdict on the mutiny charge, but he sustained the others, which he believed were "warranted." These were the charges which General Kearny himself repudiated and

[1] "The charges upon which Col. Frémont is now arraigned are not my charges. I preferred a single charge against Lieut.-Col. Frémont. These charges on which he is now arraigned have been changed from mine."—General Kearny before the court-martial; cited by Benton, *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., p. 716. See also Senate Ex. Doc. 33—1st Sess. 30th Cong.

[2] *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., p. 716.

which were supplied for reasons of their own by others not in the disagreement at all. But while approving the penalty of dismissal, President Polk remitted it because of "previous meritorious services . . . and of the recommendations of a majority of the court. Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont will accordingly be released from arrest, will resume his sword, and report for duty."

But Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont was too high spirited, and felt the injustice of the sentence too keenly, to accept this backhanded kind of reinstatement; therefore, under date of February 19, 1848, he sent his formal letter of resignation to the Adjutant-General, as he did not feel that he had "done anything to merit the finding of the court." The President's acceptance was necessary and was delayed, and it was not till Frémont wrote again to the Adjutant-General, on March 14th, that he received the documents on the 15th and was free. In the last analysis, so far as I can discover, this man who had been so serviceable to the government as a brilliant explorer and resolute soldier, was condemned and dismissed from the army because, though a subordinate officer, he was not able to establish the status with regard to each other, of two of his superiors, when all three were far removed from higher authority. If there was any justice concealed in this verdict it is certainly hard to find. It is possible that had Frémont been of the regular line, instead of the Topographical Corps, he might have perceived the matter in another light, and have transferred himself on order to the Army Chief from the Navy Chief, but in passing judgment, we must consider the exceptional conditions as they existed, and not as they might have been. The charges and the verdict appear to indicate an antagonism on the part of the line officers to Frémont, and it is not impossible that the affair of the howitzer at the time of the start of the second expedition may have contributed some resentment not only against Frémont but against the whole Benton family, and in that way had its influence in these charges and the verdict.

Before leaving this phase of the California conquest, it should be emphasised that all the officers concerned worked together and continued to do their best regardless of their personal differences on the point of rank. Kearny and Stockton were aged fifty-two and fifty-one respectively, while Frémont as noted was only thirty-two, and therefore on account of his youth and inexperience as a line officer, and of all the peculiar circumstances, he should have received special consideration in formulating charges against him. When all is said, for and against them, the fact remains that these three men carried the day as to California, and established the American arms throughout the land with the least possible interference with the inhabitants. Certainly Frémont ever after was held in high regard by the natives, for his generous treatment, the little damage done by his brigade, and his lenient way of dealing with the opposing forces at Cahuenga.

In the readjustment of affairs in California the old Missions, the presidios, the pueblos, and the private ranchos all required regulation. There was friction at first, as it was not easy to tell just what the real laws of California were. The American settlers had expected to receive grants of land; some had them, but most had not, and they were clamouring, but in the midst of their clamour a sudden note was sounded by Fate which brought, for the time being, more disorder,[1] and made California the Elysium of the World in the minds of thousands in every far-off land. Before the Great Event, certain of the old Mission farms were to be put on the market, and Frémont, before going to Los Angeles early in 1847, arranged with a friend to buy one, leaving the money for it. "The friend did buy the farm but he bought it for himself."[2] This

[1] See *California*, by Royce, chapter iv.

[2] *Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Frémont*, daughter of the Pathfinder General John C. Frémont and Jessie Benton Frémont, his wife, compiled by I. T. Martin. Frederick H. Hitchcock, New York. 1912.

friend was Larkin.[1] Again Frémont was thwarted in his plans, for the friend, instead of the highly cultivated farm where Frémont intended to live, put the money into a large Mexican land grant known then as the "Mariposas," a cattle range at the moment, containing over 40,000 acres ($43{,}386\frac{853}{1000}$, or about seventy square miles as eventually defined), but soon to become productive of gold.

But Frémont was not yet quite through in Washington. The day after the termination of the court-martial, an investigation by the Senate Military Committee was begun into the California claims connected with the conquest. Among others those of the California Battalion, for pay, were presented. Frémont was specially interested in getting a proper adjustment for these men, who had laughed at Stockton's offer of ten dollars a month, and had relied on the justice of the government to receive adequate compensation. The claims, at last, were adjusted. During the arguments before the committee many tributes were paid to Frémont.

On June 5, 1848, the Senate ordered printed twenty thousand copies of Frémont's map of Oregon and Upper California (Upper meaning here "Alta," comprising the country west of the Colorado River, and not the upper part of the present State of California), and on the 15th of the same month, to accompany the map, a large number of copies printed of the *Geographical Memoir upon Upper California*. The map, drawn by Charles Preuss "from the surveys of Captain Frémont and 'other authorities,' was at the time of its publication (1848) the most accurate map of that region extant."[2] These two publications once more exhibited the fine quality and scientific skill of the young man who had just been "broken" by the military contingent

[1] Letter of Frémont to J. R. Snyder, Dec. 11, 1849. Cited in Bigelow's *Life of Frémont*, p. 392. At this time Frémont had not seen it except in a general way when pursuing Indians on one occasion; see p. 304, this volume.

[2] Warren's Memoir, *Pacific Railway Reports*, vol. xi., p. 48.

of the government. The engineer branch of the army lost its most distinguished representative. The surveys of the Western country would have developed far more rapidly than they did, if his enthusiastic services had been retained.

About this time the controversy with Captain Wilkes took place, precipitated by a letter from Senator Benton to the *National Intelligencer*, regarding an error in the location of the California coast line previously noted in that paper. Benton stated that the error had been corrected by Frémont on the map about to be published by order of the Senate. An extensive correspondence in public prints between Wilkes and Frémont resulted.[1] Wilkes thought that Frémont meant to reflect on the accuracy of the topographic work accomplished by the exploring expedition under his command, but Frémont disclaimed any such intention and pointed out that Wilkes had misinterpreted the original letter of Benton. Frémont at last declared: "I feel warranted in saying that his [Wilkes's] entire surveys in Oregon and California, as far as they follow his own observations, are erroneously laid down in his published works." As a matter of fact none of these early maps, Frémont's as well as the others, were entirely accurate as we understand accuracy to-day. They were reconnaissance maps only, and as such were extremely good. From my own experience I realise how difficult it is to do the best topographic and geodetic work in a wild, roadless country with few men, no facilities, small funds, perhaps without a base line, and with instruments shaken about for months on pack mules; above all in limited time. There is at least one thing to be said in favour of Wilkes: he eliminated the Buenaventura River from his maps before Frémont succeeded in eliminating it from his mind.[2]

[1] See Bigelow's *Life of Frémont*, chapter xii., for these letters, or the *National Intelligencer* for 1848.

[2] Not from his own observations, however, but from consultation with Bonneville, probably with Jedediah Smith, and from Gallatin's maps.

Senator Benton was obsessed with the idea of a railway from St. Louis to California, but the transcontinental railway scheme was not original with him. A professor in St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, Kentucky, one "Colonel" Low, proposed the matter as early as 1831. The trustees declared him insane and vacated his seat.[1] In 1834, S. K. Barlow broached the same thing, and in 1845, Asa Whitney presented a memorial to Congress asking for the grant of a strip of land across the continent for the purpose. His efforts extended over several years. William Gilpin, who had accompanied Frémont's second expedition to Oregon, and was afterwards so prominent in the West, was also an early advocate of a Pacific railway.

Frémont was as much interested in the railway scheme as Benton or any of the others and he now planned to explore a route for such a line; his fourth expedition. His Washington affairs being all settled, he determined to carry out the project at once. He intended to develop his Mariposa estate, so his wife was to go by way of Panama, in the spring of the next year, 1849, while he would conduct this exploring party across country as on his previous journeys. Senator Benton expected to accompany his daughter, but finally was unable to go. "He wished to know personally the newly acquired country, its people, and its needs. . . . But not even my father," says Mrs. Frémont, "foresaw . . . the shameful injustice of our government in disregarding its treaty stipulations, and despoiling them [the Californians]."[2]

Before Frémont got started on his railway survey the "Great Event" occurred in California that changed the whole situation, and like so much else at that period it was connected with the genial and generous Captain Sutter. Sutter had determined to build a grist-mill, and to secure lumber for that and for buildings demanded by the growing population he concluded to first put up a sawmill. A man

[1] H. H. Bancroft, *California*, vol. iv., p. 223.

[2] *A Year of American Travel*, by Jessie Benton Frémont, p. 14.

named James Wilson Marshall, who had been in the Bear Flag affair, a millwright, arranged a partnership with Sutter to prospect for the mill site and to build the mill. It was necessary to find a place where the mill site and the timber were together and also were easy of access. This he succeeded in finding in Coloma Valley on the American River, forty-five miles from the Fort, engaged men to work, and soon the mill was in progress.

Marshall himself was occupied mainly on the machinery part of the work, but in superintending he generally raised the gate of the tail-race every night to let the water cut out what it would and thus deepen the channel, and in the mornings he shut off the water and walked along the race to see what was best for the day's work of the Indian gang employed on the digging.

> One morning in January [the 24th, 1848], it was a clear, cold morning [he states] . . . as I was taking my usual walk along the race after shutting off the water, my eye was caught with the glimpse of something shining in the bottom of the ditch. There was about a foot of water running then. I reached my hand down and picked it up; it made my heart thump for I was certain that it was gold. The piece was about half the size and shape of a pea.[1]

Presently he found more. He showed it to his men and all kept an eye out for gold, in a few days picking up about three ounces. Going down to the Fort, Marshall showed the metal to Sutter, who pronounced it really gold, but they thought it impure. They then tested its specific gravity and proved that it was gold without alloy. Jedediah Smith had found gold, probably on this same river, in 1827.

They endeavoured to keep the matter quiet, not thinking the deposit extensive, but a number of ex-soldiers were about and they got knowledge of the great discovery. The news

[1] From "Marshall's Own Account of the Gold Discovery." *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 537. See also "The Discovery of Gold in California," p. 525, same volume, by J. S. Hittell.

travelled fast. In a short time everybody that could get a pan, shovel, and hoe was prospecting. One find followed another rapidly and the news went round the world as all now know. Multitudes in far-off lands turned their faces towards Sutter's Mill.

The people of St. Louis where Frémont repaired in 1848 to organise his fourth expedition took a special interest in him. They admired his pluck, determination, and skill, and they had known him now since the time, ten years before, when he had been introduced by Nicollet. He was also the son-in-law of their famous Senator, and the husband of the brilliant and much-admired Jessie Benton. Above all they were profoundly interested in the railway scheme to the Pacific. St. Louis, then being the only important place in the West, naturally knew more and cared more about the new territory than any other city. Consequently Frémont had no trouble in securing the loan of funds for this fresh expedition which would have no government support. Robert Campbell, himself personally familiar with the Rocky Mountain region, Thornton Grimsley, and O. D. Filley were among his chief supporters, the latter furnishing a large part of the camp equipment. The name of Filley is known to all who have used a "Dutch Oven" in a western camp, for he being a manufacturer, his name in large letters used to decorate the iron covers. Doctor Engleman also aided in a scientific way as he had done on the previous expeditions.

While Frémont was crossing the continent, Mrs. Frémont was to make the journey to their new home by way of the Isthmus of Panama, but first she accompanied her husband in October, 1848, as far as his "starting point, the Delaware Indian reservation on the frontier of Missouri [near Kansas City], to return when he left, and remain at home in Washington until my time came to start in March." By home she meant her father's house where she always lived, being as much a part of the family as the others, when her husband was on his

exploring trips, and he had been gone about five years out of the eight of their married life. After the farewell, October 19th, Mrs. Frémont stopped the night at the Agency attended by her coloured servant, "Aunt Kitty." They were disturbed by the cries of a mother-wolf hunting her cubs, which Major Cummings, the agent, had killed. Mrs. Frémont, distraught and nervous, was unable to sleep, but the servant building the fire on the hearth, repose came, once more to be broken by Frémont himself, who, from his camp ten miles off, had ridden back for another hour with his wife. A ten-mile stretch was nothing for the man who rode that time to Monterey, and Kitty brewed a cup of tea for his good cheer. "And so," writes Mrs. Frémont, "with our early tea for a stirrup cup, 'he gave his bridle rein a shake,' and we went our ways, one into the midwinter snows of untracked mountains, the other to the long sea voyage through the tropics." It was not only the sea voyage for her, but a camping trip across the Isthmus of Panama, there being as yet no railway.

On the road from the Agency to Bent's Fort, Frémont followed the "line of the Southern Kansas (the true Kansas)," and believed that this valley afforded the best approach to the mountains. Both he and Benton had in mind the crossing of the Missouri about at Kansas City for the great transcontinental railway from St. Louis, and consequently they looked for an approach to and a crossing of the Rocky Mountains much farther south than the pass by which the Union Pacific actually went over. There was much skepticism in the East as to the possibility of carrying a line of railway across the several ranges of mountains, especially the Rocky Mountains. It was Frémont's task to find a practicable road, and for this purpose he mistakenly chose winter, "in order that all the obstacles which could exist to the construction of the road might be known and fully determined."

His plan was to follow west, from the head of the Rio

Grande, as near the thirty-seventh parallel as possible, and he believed that he could find a good pass over the Sierra between thirty-seven and thirty-eight, that is to say between, about, Walker Pass and Mono Lake. A large portion of this region was unexplored even by trappers; the canyoned Colorado River cut through it, which neither he nor anyone else knew anything about. A portion was not explored till 1872 when a party I was with went into it from the southwest, for the purpose. From the head of the Rio Grande, about longitude 107°, to the west line of the High Plateaus of Utah, about 112° 30′, between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth parallels, we now know there lies some of the most difficult country to traverse within the limits of the United States. Even to-day it is formidable. And this was the tract which Frémont was now heading for.

> "Then Frémont, passing not alone; beside him, silent, dim, unguessed,
> Unheralded, to claim her own, the Soul of the Awakening West!"[1]

By the 17th of November, 1848, he arrived at Bent's Fort, and went south to the "Big Timbers" to visit Fitzpatrick, who was stationed there as Indian agent, doing his work well, to the gratification of Frémont. Here the report came that the snow was deeper in the mountains than either Indians or whites had ever known it to be at this season, and all predicted a severe winter. Frémont should have heeded this and deferred his crossing of the unknown country till it could be reconnoitred under more favourable conditions, but having often conquered the uncertain he was not daunted. There are always so many reasons advanced by outside parties to show that a new route is impossible, that explorers after a time discount to a large degree what is told them and go ahead on their own understanding. Most people speak without knowledge and are willingly dis-

[1] Sharlot M. Hall.

couraged. Therefore Frémont confidently proceeded towards the great white barrier gleaming before him. To emphasise the season and the possibilities, heavy snow fell upon them as they advanced.

But success had been his in crossing the Sierra in winter; why should it not attend him now? There was a difference, however, between crossing a mountain range to descend into a mild, inhabited country, and crossing one beyond which lay an elevated labyrinth of plateaus, canyons, and more mountains, unpeopled and trackless. Frémont, always energetic, resolutely kept on his way, the party being roused each morning at daylight, and by the time the sun was rising the cavalcade was on the march. Yet in one of his letters he relapsed just for a moment to say to his father-in-law that breakfasting in the open before daylight with the thermometer ranging from 12° to 18° was "a somewhat startling change from the pleasant breakfast table" in the warm house. "I think that I shall never cross the continent again except at Panama. I do not feel the pleasure that I used to have in those labours, as they remain inseparably connected with painful circumstances due mostly to them. It needs strong incitement to undergo the hardships and self-denial of this kind of life, and as I find I have these no longer, I will drop into a quiet life."[1] This is the first note which he had permitted himself to express of despondency over the military injustice he had received, but he was not yet to drop into that quiet life.

In a few days they were at Pueblo, and from there on the snow grew deeper and progress became more and more difficult. There were no Carson and Fitzpatrick to lend their experience now. In their place he had their comrade Godey, a most excellent frontiersman who had been with him before, Taplin, King, and "Old" Bill Williams, a dead shot, who was said to know the Rocky Mountains better than any

[1] Letter to Benton from Bent's Fort, Nov. 17, 1848, cited by Bigelow, *Life of Frémont*, p. 359.

living man except Jim Bridger. Williams in early life had been a Methodist preacher in Missouri, and was warm-hearted, brave, and generous. He had great facility in learning languages and consequently spoke Ute fluently as well as other Indian tongues. At this time he was past middle age, but he was hale and vigorous.

Preuss as topographer was again with Frémont and there were thirty-one men besides, one of them Micajah McGehee, who kept a diary which was published by his brother in 1891, and furnishes the only account by one of the party I know of aside from that of Frémont, who, however, never published a detailed statement.[1] No latitudes or longitudes being available it is difficult to trace with exactness the route followed.

At Pueblo, Bill Williams was engaged. He went reluctantly, believing the passage of the mountains at this season very doubtful, yet he concluded they could get through, though not without considerable suffering. McGehee speaks of entering the first mountains, November 26, 1848, by "Hard Scrabble." Williams was leading up the valley of the creek still called by that name, which enters the Arkansas some eighteen or twenty miles above Pueblo, and by which they surmounted the Wet Mountain Range, and went over into Wet Mountain Valley. It would seem to have been desirable to cut across country from Pueblo to the foot of the range at the mouth of the canyon of this creek, but on Frémont's map accompanying his *Memoirs*, the trail is indicated from the mouth of the creek. The company all travelled on foot, the saddle animals being laden with 130 bushels of shelled corn.

The first day's journey in the mountains was eight miles,

[1] General Frémont did not complete the second volume of his *Memoirs*, but from his notes Mrs. Frémont and their younger son compiled it. The manuscript was sent to the Chicago firm that was to bring it out, but it never was printed. A rough draft is extant but I have been unable to consult it. For McGehee's story, "Rough Times in Rough Places," see *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 771.

and from the camp at this place several men climbed with McGehee to a high point to take a last look at the snow-covered plains stretching white to the eastward. The cold was intense, the thermometer registering zero even in the middle of the day. Successively they travelled through White Mountain Valley and Wet Mountain Valley, according to McGehee, valleys lying between the Wet Mountain and the Sangre de Cristo ranges. The order should be reversed, the "White Mountain" Valley being the present Huerfano Valley, just east of the Sierra Blanca (or White Mountains, Blanca Peak, 14,390 feet), which is the lower end of the Sangre de Cristo. Three passes open here to the west across the lofty crest of the Sangre de Cristo, the direction in which Frémont must go in order to reach the Rio Grande, as he had planned. McGehee says they went over by Roubideau's Pass, which is the middle one, the upper being Williams or Sandy Hill Pass, and the lower the Sangre de Cristo Pass. To-day the Williams is called Sandhill Pass, Roubideau's, Mosca Pass (or Musca, its original Spanish name), while the Sangre de Cristo name has not changed. Another developed later north of Sandhill called Music Pass. There were old Spanish trails through the passes, this being a region long well known to the Spaniards living lower down on the Rio Grande.

McGehee declares the cold became so great that the mercury of the thermometer often contracted altogether into the bulb. A number of the men were soon more or less frozen, the animals became exhausted; finally they began to give out one by one, dropping down in the trail, and their packs were transferred to saddle animals. The breath of the men, as in the arctic regions, froze on their faces; they could hardly speak from the stiffness caused by the ice. Men and mules were like white spectres, floundering and wallowing along through the deepening snow. After crossing the Sangre de Cristo by Roubideau Pass the staggering caravan came down into the San Luis Valley (7000 feet) (not the

Grand River Valley as McGehee states), and Williams then led on across the San Luis Valley almost due west, reaching the Rio Grande, December 11, 1848, about where the town of Del Norte now stands, near the mouth of the canyon. The river was frozen over, but there were plenty of cottonwoods and willows for fuel.

Immediately before them now was the great San Juan Range, its peaks rising to 14,000 feet, the passage for which Bill Williams apparently was heading, Waggon Wheel Gap, having an altitude above sea level of 8390 feet, with the real pass beyond much higher. Frémont says: "One of the highest, most rugged and impracticable of all the Rocky Mountain ranges, inaccessible to trappers and hunters even in the summer time." In two or three days they were once more in the midst of huge mountains and deep gorges, under mighty precipices, or skirting lofty crags. Occasionally a mule would miss its footing and tumble off the trail. Daily the obstacles increased. Many of the men were frostbitten. Blizzards smote them till they were blinded by the dense and furious clouds of finely pulverised snow driven on the gale; and the snow fell steadily. Dead mules were lying about the fires, frozen to death. Along the trail were strewn packs, pack-saddles, baggage, and dead mules. Finally they reached an altitude of 12,000 feet. All the corn had been consumed and only on the most exposed ridges was any grass to be had. There the fierce wind had blown all snow away. A path was beaten down by mauls to get the animals along for the snow was too deep for any progress without this labour, nor could the animals descend from the bleak, exposed heights: the snow was too deep. They were obliged to remain there subject to the roaring blasts with a zero edge. No warm-blooded animal could long withstand that. It was nearly impossible to travel at all. In one attempt they were beaten back in half a mile and Bill Williams was nearly frozen to death while on the way, sitting on his mule. Noses, faces, feet, fingers, and ears were

partly frozen on many of the men. At times a mule would drop down under its pack and freeze to death. The surviving mules began to eat the pack ropes and the rawhide lariats till nothing was left to tie them with and prevent their wild wandering about in search of food. They ate the blankets put over them at night; they ate the pads and rigging off the pack-saddles; they ate each other's manes and tails, and then began to eat the blankets covering the men. They became like ravenous wolves.

The air was so rare that breathing was difficult; the thermometer (F.) showed 20° below zero. They finally succeeded in crossing the crest or divide and camped in the edge of the timber below. It is not possible with the available data to tell where the crossing was. By December 17th, it was found impossible to advance. Five days, McGehee states, were spent in this camp because they simply could not move. Then Frémont decided to work back to the San Luis Valley, and on the 22d of December the retreat was begun. The remainder of the mules huddled together for warmth and from time to time as they froze "one would be seen to tumble down and the snow would cover him." It took a week to move two miles over the crest to a little stream leading to the main river. The provisions were almost gone and they began to eat the carcasses of the mules. Finding it would not be possible to save any, they also began to kill and eat those that had not yet frozen.

"The courage of the men," says Frémont, "failed fast; in fact I have never seen men so soon discouraged by misfortune as we were on this occasion." But he excepted Godey, King, and Taplin of his former party. Yet could conditions have been more disheartening? However, it was hardly worse than crossing the Sierra, except for the greater cold. There is a great difference in the way men meet hardship and it is not necessarily the muscular man who triumphs. "Nerve" as well as muscle is required.

On Christmas day a party of four selected volunteers,

King, Croitzfeldt, Brackenridge, and Bill Williams, was sent to the Rio Grande settlements, to Taos, to secure mules and provisions, while the remaining men moved the baggage down to the valley. Sixteen days were allowed for them to go and return. Days and days passed and no news came. While moving baggage Proue froze to death beside the trail.[1] The others passed and repassed in their trips to get the baggage down, but no one dared to halt long enough, remarks McGehee, to "perform the useless rite of burial."

At last the whole remaining party succeeded once more in camping on the Rio Grande, but still no word came from the longed-for rescuers. It was thought they had been destroyed by Indians, or had lost their way and perished. Finally Frémont himself with Preuss, Godey, Godey's nephew Theodore, and his special attendant Saunders, taking a small portion of the scant balance of provisions, started to investigate, intending to push on to the settlements, and send back supplies. The men remaining had provisions for "two or three meals, more or less; and about five pounds of sugar to each man." They were instructed, says McGehee, if they did not hear from Frémont in a stated time, to come on down the Rio Grande. McGehee also says Frémont told them that if they wished to see him they must be in a hurry about it as he was going to California. Frémont in his letter from Taos, February 6, 1849, says they were to follow him after three or four days when the occupation he had directed would have been finished, and in fact two days after he left they had finished packing the baggage to the river; the last provisions were gone and they were living on parfleche (rawhide). Frémont claimed they remained seven days where he left them and seems to blame them for it.

They decided that the only thing for them to do was also

[1] Frémont was disgusted with Proue's lack of effort to save himself. He says, "In a sunshiny day, and having with him means to make a fire, he threw his blankets down in the trail and laid there till he froze to death." Bigelow's *Life*, p. 369. Proue was the only one who froze to death.

to hasten down the river. With a handful of sugar for each man, some candles, rawhide, etc., they began the terrible march down the Rio Grande on the surface of the ice. They had not gone far before the Cosumne Indian Manuel, whose feet were badly frozen, begged Vincent Haler, the leader, to shoot him, and finding Haler would not do it, Manuel turned back to the recent camp to die. That day another man, Wise, lay down for the last time. At night Carver became delirious and cried to his companions to follow him, he had a plan by which they might live. He wandered off and was not seen by them again. Some of the party were snow-blind; an addition of excruciating pain to their famished frames and general misery. Then Tabeau and Moran, two Frenchmen, died. Food was absolutely exhausted; there was not even a bit of rawhide to stew up. The situation was now desperate if it had not been so before. No game was to be seen; everywhere was a wide sweep of white desolation, and beautiful though it is, an unbroken waste of snow encircling one for miles in great mountains with not a smoke to be seen is in itself somewhat appalling.

Vincent Haler now declared that it would be best not to try to hold together in one party any longer; everyone should go as he pleased and get somewhere if he could.

The next morning, therefore, with Scott, Martin, Hibbard, Bacon, Ducatel, Rohrer, and the two Indian boys who had been with Frémont since his last expedition, Joaquin and Gregario, he started on. Two others, Ferguson and Beadle, went together, and the remainder, the three Kerns, Captain Cathcart, Captain Taplin, Stepperfeldt, Andrews, and McGehee, made up the final party, agreeing to stand by each other to the end no matter what happened. In this order the dismembered expedition continued toward their only hope, the settlements far down the river, but one day's progress used up some of the men, especially Dr. Kern and Andrews, so that they could not proceed, and the party received an addition in the person of Rohrer, who had been

unable to keep up with the advance contingent. The stronger men now stood by their pledge and refused to leave the weaker. They hunted diligently. Two prairie chickens and a dead wolf were all they got, this all being divided with great exactness. Days went by with no luck. Andrews died. One of the men then made a proposition to utilise the body, fully admitting the horror of it but claiming it was justifiable, but McGehee declared he simply could not entertain the thought, and said he would stick it out to the final hour as he was, and the others were of his opinion. Then Rohrer died.

Two days more dragged by. About noon of the third day, January 25, 1849, a call was suddenly heard in the distance. New hope arose. In a few moments Godey came riding up. Food was quickly distributed, and a Mexican with him immediately prepared some *atole*, a sort of corn-meal gruel. When the men were somewhat comfortable Godey told what had happened to Frémont and also to the first relief party sent forward.

On the fifth day after leaving his men Frémont saw an Indian on the ice who belonged to a considerable party whose trail they had recently observed. They got up to him and on learning Frémont's name the young man asked if three years before he had exchanged gifts (p. 268) with the Ute chief Walker over on the Sevier. On Frémont's replying in the affirmative, he said that chief was his father and he would be Frémont's friend.

The next day a rifle, two blankets, and a promise of other presents emphasised the friendship and secured his services as guide as well as the use of four horses, and thus fortified, Frémont, who never seemed to feel hunger, fatigue, thirst, or any other ordinary sensation, was able to proceed with more certainty, though not speedily, for the animals were thin and feeble. Frémont states that he secured the Indian as a guide to "Red River settlement," by which he means a small pueblo which was situated at the mouth of a little

tributary called Rio Colorado, entering the Rio Grande from the east, about twenty miles north of Taos, and near latitude 36° 35′. About sunset, the first day of riding the horses, the sixth since leaving the men, and the twenty-second since the departure of King and the relief party, they discovered a smoke and made for it hoping to find the relief party now on its return with the provisions. It was indeed the relief party, but they were themselves in dire need of relief, being in quite as starving a condition as the other men; King already had died, and Benton states that the other three had fed on the body, but neither Frémont nor McGehee mentions this.[1] Frémont took the three men along, by means of the horses, and on January 20, 1849, the tenth evening after leaving his party, having now come 160 miles, he rode into the "Red River" settlement. His experience proves again the old saying, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself." Had he started for the relief himself instead of the men he sent, everyone would have been saved, for Frémont had nerve, courage, discretion, sense, and discrimination, although it must be admitted that he seems to have lacked judgment in the initial movement to cross such mountains in winter.[2] McGehee states that the relief party tried to reach Albuquerque across the mountains, which seems incredible with Taos so much nearer—about half-way—and the river ice to travel on.

The next morning Frémont and Godey went on to Taos. Animals and supplies were rapidly gathered and Godey immediately went back with Mexican helpers, to rescue the remainder of the expedition. Forcing his animals to their utmost, travelling every possible hour, he at length discovered Vincent Haler's camp. Leaving animals and provisions

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years*, vol. ii., p. 719. Frémont refers to it later.

[2] The error, perhaps, lay in trying to cross the San Juan Mountains instead of going more northerly into Grand River Valley; but to a man who had "bucked" the wilderness for years successfully under all sorts of conditions, crossing these mountains in winter with large supplies did not appear irrational, and he relied on Williams leading the easiest way.

here he hurried on. Next he picked up Scott, sitting snow-blind and weak by a fire. He was fed and sent down to Haler's camp with a Mexican. Then he came to Hibbard. The poor fellow had just died. Taking here a short cut in his haste, Godey passed the McGehee party without seeing them. He next discovered Ferguson and Beadle, the latter dead. Ferguson told him of the McGehee party and Godey hastened back and found them as related; then he pushed once more out on the back trail to help any others he could. Tabeau (Sorel) and Moran, devoted friends, were the next he met. Both were dead; Moran in the act of making a fire.

Manuel, who had turned back in despair to one of the camps, was found sitting in the lodge, still alive, and he was saved. He reported that Carver had passed by and had frozen. Carver, evidently, had lost his mind and did not know what he was doing. By the 9th of February all the scattered survivors were gathered at the pueblo of Taos, New Mexico, and their frightful sufferings were ended. Here at Taos, lived Kit Carson, who aided them, and who took his old friend Frémont into his house and gave him every possible attention and care.

An attempt was made with fresh animals to secure the abandoned baggage, but it led only to the loss of ten or twelve more animals, and the matter was temporarily abandoned. The snow was five feet deep in the valleys and in the mountains absolutely impassable. Almost everything, except the instruments and one of Frémont's baggage trunks, was lost. McGehee states that Dr. Kern and Bill Williams in the spring of '49 returned with a company of Mexicans to the scene of the disaster to rescue the property, and were attacked and killed by either Indians or the Mexicans with them, "we never could ascertain which."

And here ended Frémont's fourth expedition, a disastrous failure, though Frémont asserted that he had seen no obstacle, either snow or mountain ranges, at any time, to the successful building and operation of a railway, and in

this judgment he was correct, as events have fully, proved.[1] But the unfortunate record of this fourth expedition was the death of eleven men, not counting Dr. Kern and Bill Williams, killed in the later effort to get the baggage, of about one hundred mules, and the loss of practically all the property.

About this time in St. Louis (February 21, 1849), a public meeting was held on the subject of a "National Road to the Pacific," and a resolution was adopted of thanks to "Colonel John C. Frémont, for his intrepid perseverance and valuable scientific explorations in the regions of the Rocky and California mountains, by which we have been furnished with a knowledge of the passes and altitudes of these mountains, and are now able to judge of the entire practicability of constructing a railroad over them from St. Louis to San Francisco." At the time of this meeting those present supposed that Frémont's fourth expedition had successfully terminated in California, as he had planned to be there by January 8th, whereas he was recuperating in the Rio Grande Valley after the collapse of that expedition.

For the disastrous outcome of the fourth expedition, Frémont blamed Bill Williams in leading the party astray. "The error of our journey was committed in engaging this man. He proved never to have in the least known, or entirely to have forgotten, the whole region of the country through which we were to pass." But, nevertheless, Williams led them from Pueblo, Colorado, by a fairly direct road to the turning-back point, on the very line which Frémont had proposed to follow. It might have been easier to go from Pueblo up the Huerfano and over Sangre de Cristo Pass, but the route beyond would have been the same, if Frémont wanted to go over at the head of the Rio Grande, as he originally stated. If Williams failed, it was in not guiding the relief party directly to Taos, but he does not appear exactly to have gone "astray" before that.

[1] Letter of December 11, 1849, to J. R. Snyder, in Bigelow's *Life*, p. 391.

In Colorado, when someone died, they used to remark that he had gone "Across the Range." The survivors now might well exclaim:

"Half sleeping by the fire I sit,
I start and wake, it seems so strange
To find myself alone
And Tom Across the Range."[1]

For Tom, and Bill, and all the others had indeed unexpectedly gone over the Great Barrier. But many there were waking by firesides over all the country to find themselves alone. Twenty thousand Americans by way of the Mexican War had gone "Across the Range;" five thousand by battle, fifteen thousand by disease. In addition $100,000,000 had been the cost of this determination to compel the Mexicans to accept a price of $15,000,000 for land they did not want to sell, and, with several millions to settle claims, etc., the total cost became about $130,000,000. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ratified May 30, 1848, gave to the United States an addition of some 651,591 square miles.[2]

The "Manifest Destiny" of Senator Benton and the circle had eliminated all foreign territory between the Gila and the 49th parallel, and had brought the United States to face the Orient. Frémont had performed a great part in this achievement by three illuminating expeditions, as well as by valuable operations in aid of the conquest of California. His reward we have seen.

Before the country now were two paramount questions: slavery in the new lands, and a railway to the Pacific. In both of these Frémont was deeply interested. His attempt to survey a route, just thwarted, was not to be his last.

[1] J. Harrison Mills.
[2] *History of the War With Mexico*, by Horatio O. Ladd.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME EVENTS OF '49

Friends at Taos—Aubrey's Rides—Recuperation—Down the Rio Grande—Tucson and San Xavier del Bac—Mrs. Frémont at Panama—Days of Fever—San Francisco Society—Slavery or no Slavery—The Mariposa Claim and its Gold Mines—Frémont Made Boundary Commissioner—Acceptance and Resignation—The Constitutional Convention—The State Organised—Frémont Elected United States Senator—To Washington by Panama—Waiting for Recognition.

ALTHOUGH the Fourth Expedition had terminated so disastrously in the field and left the leader penniless, he continued his plan to reach California, not of course, by crossing the Rocky Mountains in the deep snows, but by a far southern route into old Mexico, avoiding them altogether. Henceforth he intended to make California his home, and he had the great Mariposa estate to develop. By this time Mrs. Frémont and his little daughter were about to start on their journey to the Coast by way of the Isthmus of Panama, and no reason existed for his immediate return to the States. From Taos he wrote to her February 6, 1849, to be forwarded via St. Louis, by St. Vrain, who was to return there the middle of the month. In this letter, which she received while ill at Panama, he says:

I make frequently pleasant pictures of the happy home we are to have, and oftenest and among the pleasantest of all I see our library with its bright fire in the rainy stormy days, and the large window looking out upon the sea in the bright weather. I have it all planned in my own mind.

Now, after all his wanderings, bruised and wounded by

the recent overwhelming defeat, and the losses in his party, his thoughts turned for relief strongly to the comfortable home he pictured near the Golden Gate; and the idea of such a home never left him to his last breath. In adversity nothing appeals to the explorer's heart so much as the tranquil picture of a fixed habitation where exist those treasures which sometimes to him seem like impossible phantasmagoria: warmth, shelter, and food. Frémont easily could always have had these, and luxury. He is sometimes disparaged for the influence his father-in-law exerted in furthering his ambitious exploring ventures, but how much easier it would have been for the great Senator to have provided Frémont with a comfortable government position; a position with large pay and little work and a luxurious home in the capital. Such things have been known! But Frémont never sought ease. No expedition was too strenuous for his ambition and, until the knockout of the court-martial, he had never failed to "make good."

At Taos he was among friends. There was Kit Carson, the wonderful knight of the wilderness, probably his most devoted supporter, eager to go on with him to California but deterred from doing so; and there was Dick Owens, soon to go to St. Louis for a bride and then strike for California; and there was Maxwell living with his father-in-law and making much money as a merchant and contractor; and in addition there were St. Vrain and Aubrey, not to mention the army officers; for the country was now held by our army. St. Vrain was a noted frontiersman and so was Aubrey; men known in every hut and teepee of the Far West. Francis Xavier Aubrey, of St. Louis, made two rides from Santa Fé to Independence that rivalled the one of Frémont from Los Angeles to Monterey. The first ride, very recently accomplished, was 775 miles in eight days, but the second was later, in 1853, the same distance in five days, thirteen hours (about 140 miles per day), when he had to be lifted out of the saddle at the end. Both these rides were on

wagers. He was a frontiersman and scout of the indefatigable kind and had worked out new routes of travel. One of these to California was criticised by Major Weightman, one of the very officers about to render Frémont assistance, and when Aubrey, to his face, sometime after this, condemned the criticism, Weightman stabbed him to death, claiming it to be in self-defence.[1]

The conditions that produced this tragedy had not yet occurred and Weightman as well as Aubrey took much generous interest in Frémont. The latter loaned him a thousand dollars with which to buy mules, and he accompanied him on his start, as far as Socorro.

Frémont had lingered at Taos only to recover from the exposure and to get news of his party which he had left behind, when the first men sent forward failed to return, in order that he might effect their rescue, and he said when he finally heard of all the misfortune, "I look upon the anxiety which induced me to set out from camp as an inspiration. Had I remained there waiting the party which had been sent, every man of us would probably have perished."[2] He had almost resolved to start out again himself to investigate when the long delayed news of the men reached him by Haler's arrival. He was then prepared to continue to California, and he hoped "to shut out these things" from his mind. Recent events had astonished him with a "persistence of misfortune which his precautions had not been adequate to avoid."

At Santa Fé he stopped two days; on the first dining with Colonel Washington, Military Governor, and on the second with the officers in their quarters, joined by Colonel Washington. They all were helpful and kind and gave him material aid. On hired animals he reached Albuquerque, where sixty horses and mules had been purchased for his account,

[1] Weightman seems to have been a trouble hunter, and had numerous encounters.

[2] Bigelow's *Life*, p. 371.

The Ocotillo

A striking plant of the Far South-West

The branches look bare but they have very small leaves while on the ends is

and he left that place with a company of thirty men with the intention of making a rapid journey, counting on reaching California in twenty-five days.

At Socorro on the Rio Grande he arrived February 24th, 1849, at half-past eight in the morning, and breakfasted by appointment with the commanding officer, Colonel Buford, proceeding the same day southward from this, the last settlement he would see, till he reached Tucson,[1] then a Mexican military outpost or presidio. Following down the Rio Grande, or near it, on the west bank to which he had crossed at Albuquerque, he left it more to the east at the Rio Palomas, and headed on a tolerably straight line for a point about where Hillsboro, New Mexico, now stands. From here he went on south to Barenda Creek, at the head of which he crossed the Mimbres Range to the Mimbres River. Thence the course was to Ojo de Vaca (Cow Spring) and from there westerly to near Lordsburg, New Mexico. Thence a south-west course was pursued to the 110th meridian at about 31° 06′ into what is still Mexico, where the direction of his trail turned northwards.

The only encounter he had with Indians was on the fourth day when one of his men who had lagged behind was shot at with guns, but missed. Discovering two Indians ahead, a little later, Frémont, with his interpreter, rode over to them. He gave his name. They said they had never heard of him before, whereupon he declared they ought to be ashamed not to know about their best friend and asked where their camp was. Finally inducing them to come to his camp, which at first they feared to do, having been the ones who had shot at his man, he fed them and treated them with so much consideration that they left in good spirits. They were probably Apaches. The later notorious Apache chief Geronimo, who led his tribe so successfully against Mexicans and whites in

[1] Tucson was first mentioned in 1699 by Padre Kino under the name of San Augustin. Tucson is from the Papago language, *Tu-uk-so-on*—meaning the water or spring at the black rock.

revenge for their cruelties and encroachments, was then only twenty years old and but recently admitted to the council of warriors. Mangus Colorado was chief of the Bedonkohe Apaches (Geronimo's band) while another notorious fighter, Cochise, was chief of the Chokonen (Chiracahua) Apaches. The Apaches were the scourge of the South-West, raiding white men and Indians alike and being the greatest enemies of the sedentary or pueblo-dwelling tribes. Frémont was fortunate in not having trouble with them. They would not be imposed upon by whites or Mexicans and consequently the struggle was long and fierce, as unlike other tribes they did not fight and forget. Their name is the synonym for cruelty but their side is seldom told.[1]

Passing north-westerly to Santa Cruz, Mexico, of to-day, this direction was continued to the 111th meridian at about 31° 35′, whence he turned more directly to the north down the San Pedro River valley past Tubac, a former presidio of Mexico, then deserted, to the Mission of San Xavier del Bac and on to Tucson, now in Arizona. The church of San Xavier, begun in 1783 by the Franciscans near the site of one built in 1700 by Padre Kino, the Jesuit explorer, was finished in 1797. It is still standing, though for a long period it was much neglected.

At the time of Frémont's visit the region south of the Gila was still a part of Mexico, the Gadsden Purchase not having been consummated. The population of Bac consisted mainly of a few families of Papago (Piman) Indians, whose huts, as at the present time, surrounded the beautiful edifice which like a flower astonishingly arose out of the heart of the desert country.[2] Nine miles north was Tucson, with a population then of about eight hundred, including the garrison. It is now an attractive city of some 20,000 and, lying at a height above sea level of 2360 feet in the clear Arizona sun-

[1] See *Geronimo's Story of His Life*, taken down and edited by S. M. Barrett, 1906.

[2] The interior shows some interesting carvings and paintings.

shine, it is a favourite resort of invalids and tourists in winter. It is an important station on the Southern Pacific Railway. About on the present line of this railway, Frémont proceeded from Tucson north-westerly to the Gila River, which he reached near the present town of Gila.

The line of march henceforth was down the Gila along the south bank. In this region he met with a large party of Sonora-Mexican "Forty-niners," about 1200 including women and children, on their way to California to profit by the great gold discovery, of which Frémont now for the first time learned. Believing that gold must also be found on his Mariposa lands he engaged twenty-eight of the men to dig for him on shares, when they should arrive there. He was to furnish the supplies, "grubstake" them as it was later called, and they were to divide with him equally what was secured. These people were familiar with the work and hence would be valuable, but unfortunately an antipathy on the part of the Americans prevented their remaining long.

The first gold in California was discovered along the rivers, in the gravel, in what were called placer mines. The extraction of it was an easy process. It could be separated from the sand and gravel by panning, that is by placing these in a flat, iron, pan and throwing out the stones by hand, and the sand by repeated scoopings of water, till the gold came in sight and could be amalgamated by pouring in a little quicksilver; but this was a slow process and only suitable for prospecting.

To work a placer properly long wooden boxes, called sluice-boxes, about eighteen inches wide and deep, open on top, would be set up, connecting, along the stream and the bottom of the sluice covered with transverse strips of wood about an inch high and perhaps a foot or so apart. A swift stream was kept running through this and into it was shovelled the gold-bearing sands and gravel. The water carried the refuse along and out, while the gold, being heavier,

lodged behind one or the other of the transverse strips and at the end of a certain time was cleaned up by stopping the water and brushing up the coarser gold with a little broom and by amalgamating the finer.[1] But before this method was developed the gold was saved with a rocker, an affair much like a baby's cradle with a sieve above, and a copper plate containing a coating of mercury below, where the gold lodged. After a time lode veins were discovered and this led to the building of stamp mills where the ore had to be crushed before the amalgamation or other process could be employed. The early methods were crude and the waste or "dump" heaps eventually yielded fortunes to those who were able to apply more refined processes.

Arriving at the Colorado River, Frémont crossed it near the mouth of the Gila and pushed on by way of Aguas Calientes (Warner's) to Los Angeles. He was expecting Mrs. Frémont to arrive soon, as it was now near the first of April.

There was, however, a serious delay in Mrs. Frémont's progress. Owing to the desertion at San Francisco of everybody to the mines, the steamer that was to have returned to Panama from San Francisco about the time of her arrival was not able to do it and seven weeks elapsed before the vessel was again at Panama. Several thousand Americans meanwhile were stalled in Panama; each monthly steamer from New York bringing more. None were prepared for such a contingency. They lived in tents or any way at all to live through the tropical climate. Mrs. Frémont had crossed the Isthmus safely, by the aid of the officials of the railway then being surveyed. She was taken up the Chagres River in boats, poling against the current, three days, as far as Gorgona, and thence overland by a mule trail to Panama, the nights being spent at the Survey camps. Her escort considered her very patient and brave.

[1] Later on the gravel and sand were washed into the sluice-boxes by directing a powerful stream of water against a bank.

Jessie Benton Frémont

From an oil painting by Fagnani. Painted in New York about 1856

"He judged," she says, "as we all do by appearances. As there were no complaints or tears or visible breakdown, he gave me credit for high courage, while the fact was that the whole thing was so like a nightmare, that one took it as a bad dream—in helpless silence."[1] At last she reached Panama, "the first walled city I had ever seen: and its land-gate and water-gate, and its old cathedral, with the roof and spire inlaid with mother of pearl, all made me feel that I had come to a foreign country."

Then the people began to literally "pile up" in Panama waiting for the steamer that was to take them to the land of gold, afterwards a sad disappointment to most of them. The days of old, and the days of gold, and the days of '49, were often sung about in later years but at the time there was probably as much discomfort, suffering, and plain misery to each twenty-four hours as the world has ever seen; the woods were full of "tenderfoots." From some of the later arrivals from New York, Mrs. Frémont heard of the disaster to the Fourth Expedition; they had later papers, and in the mail was the letter Frémont had written her from Taos giving a full account of the misfortune of his party. Everyone advised her to return home, for, they said, Frémont surely would never get through to meet her; but this was an idea she refused to accept and she would not think of going back. Mr. Gray, of the Boundary Commission, one morning brought her a late newspaper containing a letter of her father's describing the Frémont expedition, and in the evening, when he returned with further news, he found Mrs. Frémont sitting exactly as he had left her, the unopened paper in her hand and her forehead purple from congestion of the brain.

She did not comprehend a word that was said to her and a hard illness followed, but the motherly kindness and devoted attention of Madame Arcé, in whose household she was domiciled, brought her to convalescence by the time the

[1] *A Year of American Travel*, by Mrs. Frémont, p. 56.

delayed steamer arrived. She was therefore able to proceed but her brother-in-law, Governor Jacobs of Kentucky, who had started as her escort, and who had been sunstruck, and all this time was also very ill, was obliged to return to the States. She records that Lieutenant Beale arrived on his way to Washington with the first gold, but according to others, Beale did not go by way of Panama, and Mrs. Frémont must have confused the time with some later one.[1] She was still suffering but on the steamer she received excellent care. Owing to the illness of the Captain the vessel by neglect was nearly run ashore, being saved only by the prompt skill of some American naval officers who happened to be passengers.

At San Diego Mrs. Frémont was to receive word from her husband according to previous plans and she waited for this news eagerly as the anchor went down. Soon she heard many repeating to her the joyful words, "The Colonel is safe—he was in Los Angeles three weeks ago," and she heard too that he had proceeded overland to San Francisco to meet the steamer but on arriving there she found he had not come. The reason for this failure was that the steamer had been scheduled to stop at Monterey and he was there at the proper time, but the vessel, owing to shortage of fuel, went on without a halt. Captain Jones, the same who had prematurely captured Monterey, was at San Francisco with the U. S. S. *Ohio*, and the shore accommodations being scant he placed the *Ohio* at Mrs. Frémont's disposal till her husband should arrive, but the land looked more inviting to an invalid and she accepted an invitation from a wealthy merchant, Mr. Howard, to stay at a club which had been organised and which occupied the house formerly belonging to the consul Leidesdorf, deceased. It was a well built one-story

[1] See the *Life of Edward Fitzgerald Beale*, by Stephen Bonsal, in which it is stated that Beale with the first gold went from La Paz to Mazatlan, thence to San Blas and by Guadalajara and Mexico City to Vera Cruz. Version condensed from the *National Intelligencer*, where it appeared at the instance of Beale himself.

San Francisco in the "50's"
Painted by G. W. Casilear
Engraved by W. L. Ormsby

adobe with a veranda and a beautiful garden, and was thoroughly furnished, even to a piano. The servants were all Chinese, but a white woman was employed for Mrs. Frémont's benefit. This attendance did not last long as the woman left in a huff because she was not permitted to have Mrs. Frémont's new dresses copied for herself. Being paid $240 a month she felt that nothing was too fine for her.

There were at this time only a few regularly built houses in San Francisco; the rest were tents of canvas or of blankets. "The only really private house," says Mrs. Frémont, "was one belonging to a New Yorker who had shipped it from home, house and furniture complete—a double two-story frame house, which, when in place, was said to have cost ninety thousand dollars." It was intended for a bride who, alas, lived but a few weeks in all that magnificence. "At a party given to welcome her the whole force of San Francisco society came out, the ladies sixteen in number."[1] This was San Francisco in the first half of '49, when, as Mrs. Frémont was informed, "time was worth fifty dollars a minute," at least in daylight.

When Frémont arrived at last, they looked about for a home but it was difficult to know how and where to live. The only servants available were half-trained Indians, as all the whites had rushed off to gather in the gold. Eggs, milk, vegetables, and fresh meat were absent, their substitutes being canned meat, maccaroni, rice, ham, and beans. Vegetables were only to be had by working one's own garden as General Riley, commander of the Post, did. He proudly presented Mrs. Frémont with some of the products of his toil. General Canby (later killed by the Modocs) was also living here and his wife distributed to her friends excellent bread made by their mulatto cook. It was a strange life for Mrs. Frémont, as well as for everyone else. In the mines it was even worse; and the multitude of people coming in from all quarters dislocated everything.

[1] *A Year of American Travel*, Mrs. Frémont, p. 101.

In visiting among native homes, the first act of hospitality was to pass cigarettes, both ready made and unmade. Everybody was supposed to smoke and almost everybody did. The Frémonts soon took up their residence in Monterey and went to housekeeping in a wing of the Governor's house, the largest and best building in town, with thick adobe walls and a large garden surrounded by a hedge of roses. The furniture was purchased in San Francisco and was largely of Chinese manufacture. In some wares the market was extremely limited and for that reason a punch-bowl was the only thing available for a toilet basin. For a cook Frémont had brought out with him as body servant the free coloured man Saunders, but Saunders while free himself possessed, or rather did not possess, but desired to possess, a slave family. As his family had been offered to him as a job lot for $1700, Frémont sent him into the mines where he could easily earn the money with which to buy them. This left the Frémonts without his valuable services, but as Frémont and his wife were radically opposed to slavery, though both were Southern born, they were interested in seeing Saunders free his wife and children.

The subject of slave labour in California soon came up. The Sonorans who had been working on Frémont's Mariposa claim, where they found abundance of gold, presently desired to return home. Sonorans were not well treated in California. They had sent down bags of gold of about one hundred pounds each which accumulated in trunks in the Frémont quarters at Monterey. Fortune promised to smile generously. "Up to a certain point," remarks Mrs. Frémont, "everything seemed to be against us. Then the tide turned and it was indeed a flood of good fortune. . . . All our plans had been made before the discovery of gold. We had expected to live the usual life of people going to a new country, and had sent around all manner of useful things from a circular saw to a travelling carriage." It was to be life on a cattle ranch.

As in many of the affairs in his life, Frémont has been severely censured on account of the Mariposa transaction, but apparently with no very just reasons. One critic with his usual unfriendly attitude exclaims:

> How curious an accident this, that the "Conqueror of California" should by chance have purchased, before the discovery of gold in that territory, the only Mexican grant that covered any part of the gold region. . . . The gold mine had fallen to the hero, and like all his other wonderful fortunes it profited him nothing.[1]

It seems to me these sneers are unwarranted. Frémont did not claim to be the "Conqueror of California" nor did he claim to be a hero. He was essentially a modest man. The reader by this time is able from the preceding pages to form an estimate of Frémont and he will probably agree in condemning this unfair attitude.

Whether Frémont came into possession of Mariposa by accident or not is of no importance. His daughter says it was bought for him in lieu of a Mission farm which he desired and that at the time of purchase it was a cattle range considered of small value. It is perfectly plain that if gold in large quantities had not been discovered, Mariposa would have been at least a quarter of a century in arriving at any kind of a rich price, and the gold was discovered a year after the purchase. Frémont received the grant and paid for it; the land was therefore his, subject to confirmation by American law. Why should anyone condemn him for this purely legitimate business transaction? Even had he purchased it intentionally and with the knowledge that it was rich in gold, there would be no dishonour in the matter as his assailants would have us believe. It was Frémont's to do as he liked with. Where then is the crime?

The "Mariposas," as it was called by the Mexicans, was a land grant that had been made by Governor Micheltorena, February 20, 1844, to Juan B. Alvarado, for patriotic ser-

[1] Josiah Royce, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1890, p. 550.

vices. Alvarado was the one time revolutionary governor of California. Through Larkin, a man noted for excessive shrewdness in business matters, it was purchased for Frémont, instead of the Mission farm before referred to, in 1847, while Frémont was campaigning in the south. The price paid was $3000. It was a grant of land suitable for grazing purposes lying in the basin of the Mariposa River, but like so many similar grants, "the boundaries were not fixed, and the grantee had the right of locating the claim on any land within a large area."[1] By the terms of the grant Alvarado was *not to sell or mortgage it* and was to build a house within a year to be inhabited. These restrictions came up later in the question of the validity of Frémont's title, and it may be stated that Alvarado had ignored every one of them.

The Mexican law gave the grantee no right to any minerals and then came the question whether Frémont had any more claim than any other finder on the gold that was discovered there. He had provided a large amount of machinery and supplies based on the development of Mariposa as a cattle ranch, but the new turn of affairs made it inexpedient to proceed in that way and these materials remained in storage in San Francisco.

About this time Lieutenant Beale arrived in California with government despatches, and he also bore a message for Frémont. This was the appointment from President Taylor, June 25, 1849, as member of the Boundary Commission, to take the place of Weller, an appointee of Polk's. President Taylor, it is said, intended this appointment as a special mark of his disapproval of the sentence of the court-martial. As it was understood that Weller would, in any case, not continue in the office, Frémont accepted the position.

This led to a letter from Jacob R. Snyder, December 11,

[1] *The Mariposa Estate . . . Official Report of J. Ross Browne*, New York, 1868, p. 6.

1849, stating that Colonel Frémont's name had long been before the public as a candidate for United States Senator from the new State to be created and asking explanations on this (as Taylor was of the opposite political complexion) and other matters, to clear the way for the nomination. Satisfactory explanations were given.[1] Frémont then, after some consultation with Weller, and after securing for him a loan to tide him over till government funds should arrive, decided to resign his appointment and did so. The Frémonts had planned to remain in California at least seven years, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," as Mrs. Frémont put it, but the gold discovery and political prospects made material changes. The Sonorans then left for home, and as Frémont, at the moment, could not go to Monterey to divide the gold with them, he sent them his keys and they did it themselves, never taking a single ounce more than their share.

His friends now urged him to import slave labour, especially the Southerners who were eager to secure California in the ranks of the slave States as well as all the West if possible. Indeed it has been charged that the Mexican War was planned, pushed, and completed primarily to acquire territory for the extension of slavery. Frémont was told that his property could be made to pay magnificently with this labour but he refused to listen to this counsel and thus definitely began the opposition to the creation of a new slave State in California. He was unalterably opposed to slavery and later on in his career this led him into difficulty with high powers.

California began to organise a permanent American government, the story of which has been well told by Professor Royce:

> The American new-comers in California, under the new condition of things, naturally took the lead in everything. The natives,

[1] The full text of the letter is given in Bigelow's *Frémont*, pp. 388–89, and also Frémont's reply, pp. 389 *et seq.*

weary of the recent struggles, and generally hopeless and sullen, were glad to be let alone, and for the time they had little to say. It was the American who now complained bitterly of all the political, commercial, and social evils of this transition state; who loudly called for a stable government; who sometimes threatened to disregard United States authority altogether, and go back to Bear Flag conditions; and who, in general, gave his soul free vent in his newly founded newspapers. Yet it was the American who, in the midst of his private discontent, and in fact by virtue of this discontent, prepared the way for the birth of the sovereign state in 1849.[1]

Up to this time there had been a military government and government by the alcaldes of each town, but "Forty-niners" were pouring in across the plains and mountains from the East, and by vessel from every corner of the globe. Something had to be done. The gold discovery at Sutter's Mill had developed new and unexpected conditions and in a few months was giving California a greater population many times over than had been expected in years. By the end of '49 there were more than a hundred thousand people here, not counting Indians. The laws of California "not inconsistent with the laws, constitution, and treaties of the United States" were to continue in force till changed by "competent authority." What was this authority to be? In the wrangle over slavery California was again adrift, so far as any help from the Congress of the United States was concerned, but the predominating element was American and where there are more than three individuals the American is accustomed to establish a government. The talk of a Bear Flag republic was set aside and finally a convention was called at Monterey, September, 1849, to prepare a constitution for the new State of California. The constitution

[1] Royce, *California*, p. 198. See also *History of California*, by H. H. Bancroft; *History of San Francisco*, by J. S. Hittell; *History of California*, by Theodore H. Hittell; *The United States and Mexico*, by G. L. Rives; and *Historia de California*, by Gen. Vallejo.

was adopted November 13, 1849. The State then was duly organised and the third period in the history of California began. The first legislature met in San José and there Frémont and the other senatorial candidates repaired.

Mrs. Frémont was at Monterey because of the greater comfort of her quarters there, as it was deemed wise to conserve her returning health.

One evening of tremendous rain [she relates], when we were as usual around the fire, Mrs. M'Evoy, with her table and lights, sewing at one side, myself by the other, explaining pictures from the *Illustrated Times* to my little girl, while the baby rolled about on the bear-skin in front of the fire, suddenly Mr. Frémont came in upon us, dripping wet, as well he might be, for he had come through from San José—seventy miles on horseback through the heavy rain. . . . He came to tell me that he had been elected Senator, and that it was necessary we should go to Washington on the steamer of the 1st of January [1850].[1]

The next morning he rode back to San José on the same sorrel that had brought him up, making 140 miles in thirty-six hours, on one horse. Saunders was to return with the Frémonts, happy in having gained more than enough money to buy the freedom of his family; enough in fact to buy a home as well; one successful "Forty-niner" at any rate.

Mrs. Frémont became ill again on the voyage to Panama. She missed Frémont at her side, and also wondered where the devoted Saunders was. It happened that Frémont was ill also and Saunders was taking care of him. Mrs. Frémont's case was attended to by Dr. Bowie, a navy surgeon, who was a passenger, and he carried her through successfully. Again she was taken to Madame Arcé's at Panama, and so also was her husband. Rheumatic fever had developed in one of his legs which had been frost-bitten in the San Juan Mountains, and it is evident that he had suffered more on that occasion

[1] *Year of American Travel*, p. 159.

than he related. He was not given to lamentation at any time.

The steamers being a month apart, and the Frémonts having missed the one they had planned to take, they were convalescent by the time the sailing date again came round. But Mrs. Frémont was unable to walk, much less ride a mule over the rough trails, so a palanquin was built for her, and in this manner she was carried across to the Chagres River, down which they proceeded in a boat. The character of the road at this time is described by another traveller. "After having passed the first section [over water, stones, and mud], which was a trail through chaparral, we came to the old Spanish route, worn down to a depth of from eight to twelve feet into the very rocks, from having been a water-course in the rainy season."[1] The mules had worn holes in the rock to the depth of a foot or more, regular stepping places, and in stepping from hole to hole they acquired a side swing that was anything but comfortable. At times the passage was so narrow that two mules could not pass and before entering such places the drivers would halt and give a loud yell as a warning. There was little to be had to eat, and that little bad; the air was muggy and full of Chagres fever; and, taken all in all, the Isthmus passage in '49 was a dreary, desolate, uncomfortable, dangerous thing. For those living on or near the eastern seaboard of the continent who longed to join the ranks of the Forty-niners and rush to California to assist in demolishing the mountains of gold, it was a problem whether to brave the tomahawk of the plains or the Chagres fever of the Isthmus. For most of them it was sure to result in lamentations that they had not gone the other way. A large number never should have been permitted to go beyond the shadow of a lunatic asylum. Frémont had clearly marked out on paper the several routes, and mystery as to the intervening country

[1] A. C. Ferris, "Hardships of the Isthmus in '49," *Century Magazine*, vol. xix., N. S., p. 929.

was dispelled by his efforts. The Isthmus route had the advantage in time, which is why he took it, and perhaps in safety, though the cross-continent lines of travel lay for the most part through a salubrious climate, and, except in winter and in the matter of hostile Indians, offered to the persevering and cautious a not unpleasant experience.

Arriving finally at the steamer for New York some of the immediate troubles of the Frémonts were past, but others came. The weather was stormy. The time was March. The seas ran high and higher. It was necessary to lash Mrs. Frémont to a sofa. She grew worse. "I have been told," she exclaims, "that by all the laws of medicine I should have died then." Frémont himself was down with Chagres fever and the voyage up to New York was anything but joyful. At last they reached that haven and were speedily on the way to Washington. Frémont and Gwin prepared to represent the new State in the United States Senate, but things never move easily in politics and they were obliged to wait for Congress to settle the contention over the question of slavery. Was California to be a slave State or not? The South said in answer to this question, emphatically, Yes; the North quite as emphatically said, No.

CHAPTER XIX

WASHINGTON, LONDON, PARIS, AND PAROWAN

California Admitted to the Union—Senator Frémont—His Work in Congress—Commended as an Explorer by Humboldt and Ritter—Gold Medals from Prussia and the Royal Geographical Society—Slavery and Anti-Slavery Again—The Mariposa Problem—Rough-and-Ready Forty-niners—Frémont Arrested in England—A Sojourn in Paris—On the Trail Again—Fifth and Last Expedition—Named for President—Starving through the Mountains—A Pathfinder—Death of Oliver Fuller—Friendly Mormons of Parowan—Mental Telepathy.

THE dispute in Congress over the question of slavery, or no slavery, in California, was temporarily adjusted by the "Compromise of 1850" and the State (whose constitution prohibited slavery) admitted into the Union as one where the barbarism was not to be established, either north, or south, of 36° 30′, the Missouri Compromise line, though it was not till some years later that the possibility of slavery was absolutely eliminated. It was on the 9th of September, 1850, that the Bear Flag star was transferred to the galaxy of the Union, and the next day the senators-elect, Frémont and Gwin, presented their credentials. After some opposition, on the part of Jefferson Davis and others on the ground that "the constitutional provisions could not have been complied with," a favourable vote disposed of the matter and the two senators took their seats. In order to adjust their terms to the proper alternation, they were assigned to draw lots; Frémont had the poor luck to draw the short term.

Shortly after reaching Washington he was invited to attend the Mississippi and Pacific Railroad convention set for April, in Philadelphia, to further the project of estab-

lishing at once a national waggon-road across the western mountains, to be the forerunner of the much talked of Pacific railway, but his physical condition, owing to the Chagres fever, prevented his going. He wrote a long letter presenting his views, stating among his reasons why a railway was practicable:

> The snows are less formidable than would be supposed, from the great elevation of the central part of the route. They are dry, and therefore are more readily passed through; are thin in the valleys, and remain only during a brief winter. . . . In conclusion, I have to say that I believe in the practicability of this work, and that every national consideration requires it to be done, and to be done at once, and as a national work by the United States.

He still had in mind further exploration for what he believed was the most feasible route across the mountains, between the 37th and 38th parallels, with Senator Benton's interest as great as his own in the project, but at present he devoted his attention entirely to the duties of his senatorship. Having been seated so late in the session he had only twenty-one days in which to introduce a number of measures relating to California. Most of these pertained to land and mining claim adjustments as these were the most crying necessities of legislation in that quarter. A list of the bills is given by both Bigelow and Upham, in their works on Frémont, and I will omit it here. Upham remarks, "His style of debate was compact, clear, easy, and natural. He was thoroughly equipped with the requisite information and presented his views sensibly and forcibly."[1]

Senator Frémont opposed any tax on the product of the mines, believing that the resulting development of the country and foreign commerce would reimburse the Government adequately, but to my mind the whole policy that ensued appears wrong. The certain result of striving to imitate Aladdin in the development of the magnificent

[1] *Life of Frémont* by Charles Wentworth Upham, Boston, 1856.

resources was to demolish and cripple them. I have observed forty years of this method of giving away the people's inheritance to a few with no return, and it seems to me short-sighted. Frémont was thinking, as all did at that time, of opening up a country whose resources were supposed to be inexhaustible, and which, it was believed, would not in a century become even partially settled. At present over 10,000,000 people live in that "wilderness," and land in some of the deserts which Frémont examined with such difficulty can be bought only at high prices; mines are pouring treasure into private coffers with no share to the whole people who presented them, and even our National Parks, so wisely set aside, are wanted for monopoly.

Frémont's record in the Senate was entirely creditable. At the close of the session one unpleasant episode occurred. Senator Foote, of Mississippi, speaking to another bill interjected derogatory remarks upon one of Frémont's bills, to adjust land claims, insinuating that this was in the interest of Frémont's Mariposa grant. Senator Frémont immediately left the Chamber and from another room sent a messenger to Senator Foote, who went to meet him as soon as the speech was over. Frémont then declared that the statements made were unworthy of a Senator, whereupon Foote struck at him. Others then interfered. The next day, through Governor Price of New Jersey, Senator Frémont demanded a retraction. The reply by letter said: "I do not feel that I should be doing justice to myself did I not in writing (as I thought I did last night very explicitly, *orally*) deny that I said anything denunciatory of the bill to which you refer, or of those who introduced it." He also said that if Senator Frémont, after this note, desired satisfaction he would arrange it. The affair would have been settled with this had not a letter appeared later in a newspaper, supposed to have been authorised by Foote, saying no retraction had been made and charging Senator Frémont with attempting to throttle debate on the California land bills. Frémont dropped it,

however, with a statement of the whole matter, to the Baltimore *Sun*, September 30, 1850, which put Senator Foote in a rather unpleasant position.[1]

Not long after the adjournment of Congress, Frémont received a letter from Alexander von Humboldt (dated October 7, 1850) transmitting, by order of the King of Prussia, the great gold medal for progress in the sciences, bestowed upon him by the King (Frederick William IV.), and referring to "the public testimony [of Humboldt in his new edition of his *Tableaux de la Nature*] of the admiration which is due to your gigantic labours between St. Louis, of Missouri, and the coasts of the South Sea." He further said: "You have displayed a noble courage in distant expeditions, braved all the dangers of cold and famine, enriched all the branches of the natural sciences, illustrated a vast country which was almost entirely unknown to us." He also thanked Frémont for naming certain regions after him and after his friend Bonapland, and informed Frémont that on the proposal of Karl Ritter he had been made an honorary member of the Geographical Society of Berlin. To be commended by two such eminent geographers as Humboldt and Ritter was in itself high honour, particularly as Humboldt stood at the very front of all explorers and scientific investigators. But this was not all, a few months earlier (June) Frémont had received from the Royal Geographical Society, the Founder's Medal. This was presented through the State Department at Washington. In his acknowledgments, addressed to Sir Roderick Murchison, president of the Society, Frémont says, "I feel it a particular pleasure that they are rendered to a society which I am happy to recognise as my *alma mater*."

As soon as his duties for the session were over, Senator

[1] At the next session Frémont caused the bill to be altered by Senator Benton in such a manner that his case would be excepted and the Mariposa claim be settled by itself. Senator Foote previously had made an attack on Senator Benton whose anti-slavery activity was most objectionable to the Southerners, and doubtless Frémont's anti-slavery position had much to do with Foote's animosity, especially, as Senator Benton was hit at the same time.

Frémont returned to California, by way of Panama, intending to be back for the remaining term ending March, 1851. This certainly gave him little time and it seems singular that he should not have remained the interval in the East. As it was the Chagres fever seized him again, and when the date arrived to go to Washington he was incapacitated for travel and could not fulfil his obligation. Some of his enemies charged that he went out to electioneer for the senatorship to succeed himself, and he did become a candidate in 1851. He was supported by the Free State party, whose title indicates that slavery for the Golden State had not been given up entirely. The pro-slavery faction, of which Gwin was a leader, had increased in power. Frémont, to them representing all things wicked, diabolical, and dangerous, they succeeded, after a series of 144 ballots, in defeating him but not in electing the successor—that went over to the next legislature. Nevertheless Frémont did not back down on his opposition to slavery. In Congress, to be sure, he had voted against a certain bill relating to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and much has been made of that, but as he voted, at the same time, with the northern element against Jefferson Davis and his party who were in favour of the bill, or pretended to be, it is clear that his action was no contradiction to his principles, but had a correct purpose.

He occupied himself in California with his Mariposa estate, from the 14th of May, 1851. It was leading him into many complications. Its boundaries were still uncertain; its title had not yet been confirmed by the American government, which, indeed, now took an extraordinary step with regard to all the old land titles. Instead of justly investigating the *bona fide* ownerships (many of which had come down from father to son) and having their boundaries determined, a law was passed by Congress, in 1851, denying *all* titles and refusing confirmation to any without absolute proofs, *on paper*, of ownership. Meanwhile the original archives of the old Mexican administration had been nailed

up in boxes at Benicia, and in other towns, and could not be utilised by either the owners, claimants, or the government officials. For six years there was chaos. A legion of land forgers was engendered by this condition of things, and they had it all their own way, for every liar not only felt secure, but was secure. The simple Mexicans, understanding little or no English were babes in the hands of these rascals. Those who went to law to secure justice presently found themselves destitute and without their lands as well.

Most of the old land grants were very large, were uncertain in bounds, and covered some of the best tracts in the State. Settlers could not tell where to settle, and therefore they settled wherever they pleased, often directly on someone's undoubted possessions, knowing there was no redress possible, and no expulsion except at the muzzle of a gun. No titles were given, but taxes were collected just the same, from the very persons denied their rights.

Frémont had arranged the previous year to realise on his property by sales of claims in London, his agent there being one David Hoffman, but he had besides given Senator Benton a power of attorney.[1] Frémont had also sold the year before, to Thomas Denny Sargent, some leases on the Mariposa, and Sargent, being a "hustler," had gone to California, located and inspected the claims he held, and in the spring of this year of 1851, had gone to London where with such vigour he struck into the financial world, that he disposed of his leases for a large sum. This great success appealed to Benton, and under his power of attorney he proposed that Sargent should take over the entire tract for a million dollars. Sargent, believing in the soundness of the property, accepted, made his first payment, returned to England, and there speedily arranged for the sale of the whole property at an enormous advance on what he had agreed to pay for it.

[1] *The Frémont Estate: an Address to the British Public Respecting Colonel Frémont's Leasing Powers to the Author from June, 1850*, by David Hoffman, London, December 20, 1851.

Hoffman, who had been working on the basis of leases and organising subsidiary companies, made a vigorous protest at being thus left in the lurch, unable to fulfil his obligations, as no sale of the whole tract had been contemplated when he took hold, and he wrote to Frémont. On October 29, 1851, accordingly, Frémont ordered a temporary suspension of all transactions. He had previously written, "I have decidedly declined any sale of the Mariposas," and he also had declared Flandin's offer to sell (Flandin being with Sargent), "an unauthorised impertinence . . . he has no such power and never had." The situation was decidedly complex. The action of the American government in refusing to recognise all land claims added to the trouble and placed his Mariposa purchase in a precarious position. With such uncertainty of title how could he proceed, particularly as it was uncertain that the gold mines would go with the land?

The whole of California was full of complications over these land and mining claims. The Indians, too, resented the taking of their lands by the miners, and altogether the people of the old regimé many a time must have lamented the day when the restless Americanos appeared; but beyond all have lamented the discovery of gold. Those delightful, dreamy days of the past; the life of the old Missions; the padres; the sounds of vesper bells floating across tranquil fields—all were gone forever. No more would they loiter by the threshold chanting the soft Spanish airs to the accompaniment of the guitar. It was now "Yankee Doodle" and "the Devil take the hindmost." The world believes itself greater when it is in a hurry and making a noise.

A feverish excitement prevailed; gambling, drunkenness, horse-racing, horse-stealing, claim-jumping, and disorder generally. The days of '49 beheld here one of the most reckless, heterogeneous societies ever brought together.

In San Francisco [the late sleepy Yerba Buena], the number

Early Sacramento
From the Print Collection, New York Library

of duels and personal encounters was prodigious. From the day they disembarked the new arrivals found excitement. A month was a year; a week a month. Each day had its own history, both for the town and for individuals. The pleasures were reckless, not tranquil, and no one had leisure to be courteous. Brawls occurred nightly. No one was arrested, no one warned, except perhaps by his enemy.[1]

The town was largely ruled by the "Sidney Ducks," a gang of English convicts from Australia.

Some of the songs originating in this period became widely known, and lingered in Western camps for decades; for the camper, prospector, and even the gambler, liked a song. As late as 1872, *The Days of '49*, was still a favourite, and I heard it daily sung nobly from the saddle by one of our helpers, a young man who acquired it from his father. It had many stanzas each describing a familiar character of some mining camp, like "Old Lame Jess" who "never missed a single meal and never put up a cent, In the days of old, and the days of gold, and the days of '49." Another was "Joe Bowers":

My name it is Joe Bowers,
I've got a brother Ike,
I'm bound for Californy,
And I'm all the way from Pike.

But in addition many good old English songs were in vogue, for there was nothing so dear to the English or American heart.

Feeling ran strong on the slavery question. Senator Gwin and his faction were working with the object to divide the State in two (in the event of failure to introduce slavery), the southern half to be a slave State.

When Frémont had recovered his health he undertook some contracts to supply certain government commissioners

[1] *A Senator of the Fifties, David C. Broderick*, by Jeremiah Lynch, San Francisco, 1911. There is much of interest in this book.

with a large amount of beef cattle for distribution, by treaty, among twenty-one of the starving Indian tribes which had fled to the barren high mountains, to escape persecution and destruction. The feeding was expected to pacify them till other measures for their control could be arranged. Frémont went to the southern ranches and collected many herds, himself superintending the driving north, delivering 1,225,500 pounds "on the hoof." The results were what had been anticipated, but the commissioners could not get the money, and Frémont could not get his pay, Congress holding that this action had not been authorised. It was three years before he succeeded in getting a special bill through for his reimbursement. He finally received the money amounting with interest to $240,000. While he was in California this time, his home in Washington was, with others, destroyed by fire, on the 21st of June, 1851, but Mrs. Frémont being there and having a half-hour's time succeeded in saving all her husband's papers as well as many other valuables.

Circumstances now directed Frémont's steps eastward again and early in March, 1852, he arrived in New York, and on the 10th of March, with his family, he crossed to England in the steamship *Africa*. Their sojourn in London was highly agreeable, with the exception of one incident which was humiliating. Lawrence was then our minister, and he was an old friend. A presentation at the Queen's Drawing-Room and other pleasant functions were arranged, and they were invited to the annual dinner given by Miss Coutts in honour of the birthday of the Duke of Wellington. That famous general, having the naming of guests, included the Frémonts in his list. On another evening as he was leaving the Clarendon Hotel with Mrs. Frémont to go to a dinner, he was suddenly arrested as he was about to enter the cab. He declared it must be a mistake, but the four constables roughly hurried him off to prison. Mrs. Frémont despatched a messenger to apprise their host, and

herself hastened to the home of the American Minister, but he had started for the same dinner. It was not till very late that the situation was understood and that any friend got to Frémont. He was obliged to remain in prison over-night. The next day George Peabody furnished the funds necessary to liberate him on bail. This was the case of Gibbs *vs.* Frémont. It was for the non-payment of four drafts amounting to $19,500 which had been drawn by Frémont, in 1847, on James Buchanan, Secretary of State, for the purchase of supplies necessary for the maintenance of the California Battalion when Frémont was acting governor of California. Buchanan had been unable to pay these because Congress, not having authorised the expenditure, failed to make the appropriation. The disappointed English holders of the "paper" concluded the surest way of getting the money was to proceed against Frémont, personally, and they pounced on him regardless of courtesy at the first opportunity; another of his rewards for activity in acquiring California for the United States.

The testimony of James Buchanan, taken in Philadelphia for the British court, was all favourable to Frémont.[1] The matter was finally adjusted, but as it is a long story and not necessary here, I omit it.

Leaving London, Frémont went to Paris and rented there the palatial furnished house of Lady Dundonald who desired to be absent for a period. It was on the Champs Elysées, half-way between the Arc de Triomphe and Ronde Pointe. While yet in London, news came of the death of Mrs. Frémont's young brother Randolph, who had been with Frémont on the first expedition. She was so saddened that her eyes were injured by the constant weeping, and she was threatened with blindness. After the Parisian experience

[1] Testimony in Gibbs *vs.* Fremont, taken for the defendant at Philadelphia before commissioners appointed by Her Majesty's Court of Exchequer. See also a pamphlet, *Colonel Fremont's Private and Public Character Vindicated*, by James Buchanan.

they returned to Washington in June, 1853, and took a house adjoining that of Senator Benton.

In March, 1852, Congress had ordered to be undertaken, three lines of survey, "for overland travel and the prospective railway route," and according to Mrs. Frémont her husband had been selected to head one of these expeditions.[1] No name, however, being put into the bill, Jefferson Davis, now Secretary of War, and doubtless not favourably disposed towards Frémont on account of his anti-slavery activity, named Captain Gunnison, instead. Frémont was not to be thwarted, however, in his determination to make the exploration he had long had in mind, and which he had failed in completing in 1849, and with funds of his own, and Senator Benton's, he organised in August, 1853, for the execution of his plan the following autumn and winter. "He chose the dead of winter for his exploration," says Benton, "that he might see the worst—see the real difficulties and determine whether they could be vanquished. He believed in the practicability of the road and that his miscarriage in 1848–49 was the fault of his guide, not of the country, and he was determined to solve those questions by the test of actual experience." This was to be his fifth expedition across the continent, and it was also to be a completion of the fourth which ended in the misfortune, heretofore described.

The party consisted of twenty-two persons, among them ten Delaware chiefs, one of them "Solomon" who had been with Frémont before, and two Mexicans. Egloffstein was topographer, Strobel assistant, Oliver Fuller, assistant, W. H. Palmer, "passenger," and S. N. Carvalho artist and "daguerreotypist." The record of the daguerreotypist, published in 1857, is the chief available source of information for the details of this expedition as far as the Mormon town of Parowan, and it is in this, and otherwise, a very interesting

[1] Frémont's *Memoirs*, p. xv. He made a definite proposition to conduct surveys for the government.

and valuable book.[1] Frémont, himself, published nothing except a brief paper, very general.[2]

Carvalho's "professional friends were all of the opinion that the elements would be against" his success in making daguerreotypes in the open air especially in winter, but he went well prepared and he met the difficulties admirably.

Carvalho, Egloffstein, Fuller, and a photographist, Bomar met Frémont in St. Louis, in September, 1853, and together they proceeded to Kansas City on the steamer *F. X. Aubrey*, named in honour of the famous frontiersman before referred to. From the steamer landing (at what is now Kansas City) the baggage was sent by waggons to Westport a few miles back, where Frémont had fitted out at other times. Here a contest between the "wax process" photography of Bomar and the daguerreotype process of Carvalho was won by the latter on account of the long washing necessary for the photograph. Frémont decided this would cause much delay, and Bomar, therefore, and his outfit, were left behind.

For arms each man had a rifle, of course a muzzle loader with "cap" priming, and a Colt's revolver, also muzzle loading, while some of the Delawares had "horsemen's pistols" also. The Delawares, with whom Frémont was on the most cordial terms—everyone of them would have ventured his life for him, says Carvalho—went to their homes to make preparations, and were to join the party about a hundred miles west. The baggage was apportioned at about sixty-five to ninety pounds for each mule, no wheeled vehicle being taken. The men's personal luggage

[1] *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West with Colonel Fremont's Last Expedition*, etc., by S. N. Carvalho, artist to the expedition, New York, Derby and Jackson, 1857.

[2] Letter of J. C. Fremont to the Editors of *The National Intelligencer*. June 13, 1854; appendix in Bigelow's *Life*. "Colonel Fremont's Exploration of the Central Railroad Route to the Pacific," *Senate Miscel. Document*, No. 67, 33d Congress, 1st Session.

was restricted to a certain weight, and all the balance was sent back to town. Making a trial start the caravan travelled six miles and camped at the Methodist Mission, and the next day a few miles put them at the Shawnee Mission. Here Max Strobel joined the party as a volunteer, though at first Frémont was not inclined to add anyone else to his force. He was not feeling well and he concluded to return to Westport, taking Strobel with him to buy an outfit, and directing the others to proceed till they met the Delawares; then to wait for him.

On September 24, 1853, therefore, the cavalcade of riders and pack-mules started westward while Frémont and Strobel went east. On the 27th the Delawares were met. "A more noble set of Indians, I never saw, the most of them six feet high, all mounted and armed *cap-à-pie*, under command of Captain Wolf. Most of them spoke English and all understood it." On the 29th, Strobel came, bearing a letter from Frémont to Palmer, who was in charge, stating that it had become necessary for him to go back to St. Louis for medical advice, and ordering the advance of the outfit as far as the "Saline Fork" of the Kansas River, where there were plenty of buffalo, and to remain there. This was accordingly done. It was while in that camp waiting for Frémont's arrival that, in a discussion of possible candidates for the next Presidential campaign, Carvalho mentioned the name of "Colonel" Frémont. "It was received," he declares, "with acclamation, and he is the first choice of every man in the camp." So far as I know this was the first nomination of the "Pathfinder" for the Presidency.

But on this expedition for the first part of the route—that is as far as Green River—Frémont was far from being a pathfinder. On the contrary, the way he had planned to travel by Cochetope Pass had been traversed only a month or two before by his friend Beale, with a colleague named Heap, who got safely through to Parowan, Utah, notwithstanding that Wakara (Walker) the Ute chief was on the

war-path.[1] There was said to be a price of fifteen thousand dollars on his head by the Mormons, whose new settlements, beyond the Wasatch, he was threatening, but this was not true. Instead Brigham Young had sent a present of tobacco and desired to be friendly with him. Furthermore, not only had Beale and Heap just made this passage, but Captain Gunnison, he who was reported to have been appointed to the command of the very expedition intended for Frémont, had left Westport, ahead of Frémont, June 16, 1853, and at this time was in the heart of the vast mid-region giving it a thorough examination for the prospective railway as he marched—the "Central Pacific Railroad." Before Frémont had returned to lead his party forward, however, Captain Gunnison, R. H. Kern, who had been with Frémont on the 1848 expedition, and was topographer of Gunnison's party, Creutzfeldt, one of the 1848 party, and several others, were surprised and killed by Utes near Sevier Lake, Utah, early on the morning of October 25, 1853.

On the 30th of October, the Frémont camp was beginning to look anxiously for the coming of the leader. For some days the prairies were on fire towards the east and when the night dropped the clouds of rolling smoke took on the dramatic and ominous, lurid, appearance well-known to dwellers on the plains in early days. The Delawares prepared against the onslaught of fire by carrying everything down to the bank of the creek, and picketing the horses there. The belt of woods where the animals had found shelter a day before was soon left a blackened mass. The camp could not be moved far because Frémont might not easily discover its whereabouts. After breakfast on the last day of October, one of the Delawares uttered a yell as he pointed to an open space, and there came Frémont, followed by an immense man on an immense mule, and by the cook and Solomon the Delaware, galloping through the blazing element in the

[1] He is called Walker and Wakara, the latter his native name, probably Wakar.

direction of our camp." He had travelled over many miles of country which had been on fire. That midnight, the fire jumped the Kansas River. The next day on starting the "only escape was through the blazing grass; we dashed into it, Colonel Frémont at the head, . . . passed the fiery ordeal unscathed, and made fifteen miles to the dry bed of a creek, beyond the reach of the devouring element."

In several days they reached Bent's place, on the Arkansas, with no incident of importance but the loss of five animals. One of these, nearly exhausted, they recovered on the way, and the rest at Bent's, where also, in a village of about 150 lodges, were the Cheyennes who had stolen them, and who frankly declared they would have taken more if they could. Bent's Fort, of the earlier time, had been recently destroyed by Indians, and Bent had re-established himself, thirty miles farther down stream, at this place. Two Indian teepees were procured, one large enough for the whole party, the other smaller for Frémont's individual shelter. Buffalo robes, moccasins, etc., were also purchased.

After a week here, refitting, the caravan moved on, but without the big doctor (whose name was Ober), Frémont finding he no longer required his attention. Continuing up the Arkansas they passed the mouth of the Huerfano, and Huerfano Butte, where Carvalho enthusiastically exclaims: "If ever a railroad is built through this valley, I suggest that an equestrian statue of Col. J. C. Frémont be placed on the summit of Huerfano Butte; his right hand pointing to California, the land he conquered." Frémont has the credit, at any rate, of being the first to attempt a survey for a railway across the mountains. It was his determination to find out what kind of an obstacle the snows of winter would be, that led to the disaster of 1849, and is now leading him again through the high mountains at midwinter. Gunnison's survey passed too early in the season to settle this important factor of snow, although he made what inquiries he could, and as yet no one had any exact knowledge of its quantity.

They entered the mountains, December 3d. Passing over the Wet Mountain Range as on the 1848 trip, and descending through the forbidding peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Range by way of the Sandhill Pass, into San Luis valley, they came upon, and followed, the trail of Gunnison, who had come over by Sangre de Cristo Pass, farther south. As Gunnison had a very large, well-equipped party with many waggons, there was no difficulty in seeing where he went.[1] They proceeded comfortably and leisurely along up the wide flat valley, past the present town of Saguache, latitude 38° 05′ 43″ and longitude, 106° 08′ 30″, on Sawatch Creek, which flows down from Cochetope Pass. Near this they made a camp in a beautiful "park" where a dozen deer were secured. They remained several days to get more deer and dry the meat. The road up the creek to the summit of the Pass was easy, being very gradual in its ascent. The expedition was "travelling slowly along waiting for the winter," and up to this time had gone on dry ground. But when they reached Cochetope Pass on December 14, 1853, Frémont's desire for winter's presence was realised; winter set in with clouds, falling snow, and fogs. The snow soon was two and one-half feet deep on the ridges, four inches in the Pass, but very light in the valleys as Frémont had deduced it would be from his previous expeditions. He was much gratified to find his and Benton's opinion on this point confirmed by the experience on this expedition.

Wherever the forest was an obstruction for waggons, the Gunnison party had felled the trees and it was now clear going for Frémont's pack train. On some trees crosses had been cut, but this was doubtless the work of Mexicans, who knew the pass for years back. Cochetope Pass has an altitude of 9088 feet (Wheeler). Its latitude is about 38° 12′ and longitude 106° 35′. It was the pass to which Fré-

[1] See *Pacific Railway Reports*, vol. ii. Report by Lieut. E. G. Beckwith, 3d Artillery, upon the route near the 38th and 39th parallels, explored by Capt. J. W. Gunnison, House Doc. 91; 33d Cong., 3d. Sess., 1855.

mont should have been guided in '48, but was not, owing perhaps to his declaring he wanted to go west by the head of the Rio Grande. Williams, his denounced guide, certainly well knew Cochetope Pass, and would have gone that way if he had understood.

Gunnison had, as guide, another noted scout and frontiersman, A. Leroux; while on this trip, Frémont took no guide at all. Heap describes the pass as "a wonderful gap, or more properly speaking, a natural gate, as its name denotes in the Utah language. On each side mountains rise in abrupt and rocky precipices. . . Cochetope signifies . . . Buffalo Gate, and the Mexicans have the same name for it, '*El Puerto de los Cibolos.*'" Large numbers of buffalo formerly traversed this pass in both directions. Their heavy trails, and those of the Indians, told a story of many years of familiar use.

Cochetope Creek, which heads on the west side of the Pass, led the caravan down to its mouth in what is now Gunnison River. From there they continued down the Gunnison as far as White Earth Creek where they cut across country, to avoid canyons, to the Uncompahgre River on about latitude 38° 30′, and followed down the Uncompahgre to the Gunnison. Down the latter they went to the Grand. Keeping to the Grand till they got a little below 39°, they left it and crossed, on a westerly course, the sterile plateau between the Grand and Green, arriving at what is now Gunnison Valley, Green River, in Utah. Captain Gunnison on striking the Spanish trail, coming through this locality, from Santa Fé to Los Angeles, followed it and crossed the Green at the old, regular, crossing of this trail; latitude (according to Gunnison) 38° 57′ 26″, but Frémont, endeavouring to work more to the south, swung off in that direction, descended over some cliffs to the Green, and crossed it near the mouth of the San Rafael. Without great labour and risk he could not have gone farther down Green River than this (except in boats) because the deep, winding canyon, named by Powell Labyrinth, begins at the San Rafael. From this

Little Fire Hole Falls
Characteristic of hundreds of Rocky Mountain streams
Photograph by United States Geological Survey

stream up to the exit of the Green from the jaws of Gray Canyon, some distance above the present town of Blake, (the crossing of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway) the valley is ruggedly picturesque, being studded with numerous striking buttes. For a day or two, we camped, in 1871, at the mouth of the San Rafael, and Major Powell named an attractive architecturally formed butte a little above, after me. There were many evidences that the place was a favourite resort of the Utes, and even at that time there were no settlers anywhere in the region. From here Frémont went up the San Rafael, north-westerly to about Tidwell, or 39°, and then turned abruptly south and south-west along the eastern edge of the "San Rafael Swell," continuing to Frémont River (as Powell named it later) at about 38° 20′ and longitude 111°. Thence he turned west up Frémont River to Rabbit Valley, Utah; thence to Grass Valley on about 38° 25′, just below Fish Lake; thence down Otter Creek to the East Fork Sevier, and down this, west to Circle Valley. Then up the Sevier, south, to about 38° 07′ where he struck west, across a mountain, to and through what is now Frémont Pass, and came to the California Road not far above the settlement of Parowan.[1]

From the time Frémont diverged from Gunnison's trail, just before reaching Green River, till he arrived at Circle Valley on the Sevier, or even at Frémont Pass, he was again something of a "pathfinder," for he travelled new ground. There may have been a branch of the Spanish Trail in this direction, as suggested on some old maps, in which case he may have travelled its course part of the time, but on the War Department map of 1860, the region he is now traversing and much more, was represented by a blank.[2] It continued

[1] This route is blocked out from the line as plotted on the map accompanying Frémont's *Memoirs*, from some of his statements, and from Carvalho's book. The latitude and longitude record I have not seen.

[2] See this map: *Territory and Military Department of Utah, Compiled in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers of the War Department, 1860.* On it is also plotted Escalante's trail from Utah Lake to Oraibe.

to be so represented, on authentic maps, till the Powell Survey explored and mapped it in 1869–1875.

In 1872, with a detachment of this Survey, I came up from the south-west through part of this blank region, and our trail at that time, as I now perceive, reached at about longitude 111° 15′ and latitude 38° 05′ to within some fifteen miles of Frémont's path of eighteen years earlier, coming from the opposite direction. It was considered an unknown country; we could not find anyone in the scattered settlements of the Mormons, lying to the west, who knew anything about it, but they would not have been informed concerning the Wolfskill period (from 1830 on) of the Spanish Trail, when efforts doubtless were made to shorten the route between Santa Fé and Los Angeles. However, that may be Frémont could follow no such faint old trail, covered as the country now was by snow; he had to find his own way.

Having thus briefly sketched as far as Parowan, the line he is following, we will see how he fares in so boldly breaking across what was practically, if not absolutely, a region of unknown mountains and canyons. Winter travelling of this sort is not bad if one has plenty of blankets and food, that is, not for men, but for horses trying to live on grass it is almost impossible, and sufficient grain cannot be taken for a long period. In the low valleys and canyons of this region, some grass can usually be found on windswept places or on south slopes (in February I have seen it in latitude 36° 30,′ green and growing at eight thousand feet where the snow had melted in some favourable nook), but deep snow prevents horses from pawing down and they soon grow thin and weak. We feel resolute enough with food at a comfortable camp, or house, but it is not pleasant to halt at nightfall on some drift-clad crest, the soft flakes falling, ever falling, nonchalantly, the maze of surrounding summits glimpsed bewilderingly through the flickering pall, and wonder where next to turn for a probable course, while the dimming light declines and the dull waste glides surely through deepening blues to

darkness. Those who have had this experience will bow to Frémont, for his nerve, or courage, if that is a better word, in pushing across the wintry wilderness of rugged mountains, unswervingly, to the distant goal he had set.

While working their way through Grand River Valley the Frémont party were obliged to climb a steep mountain slope covered with snow. About half-way up, a leading mule fell and rolling down swept nearly the entire outfit, of fifty or more pack-animals several hundred feet to the bottom. Strangely enough only one mule and one horse were killed. A similar accident once happened to a Geological Survey party, but not one of the animals was seriously hurt.

A little farther on the Delawares discovered a "wild" horse, young and fat, and killed it for food, the party now requiring every possible contribution to their food supplies. Moccasin tracks were seen about the same time and a special lookout was kept for an enemy. They soon came to a large village of Utes who received them well and camp was pitched at the place, in the Uncompahgre Valley, a favourite resort of the Uncompahgre Utes.

Some venison was purchased from them, and all went well till about nine o'clock that night when there was a disturbance. A half-breed who knew some Spanish acted as interpreter for an angry committee of the Utes who surrounded Frémont's tent. It was learned that the horse that had been appropriated belonged to one of this band who had discovered the loss and pay was now demanded. Frémont kept within his lodge, which produced the desired impression on the Indians of his importance, and he communicated through Carvalho. He directed that the horse should be paid for as the Utes clearly were in the right. They then wanted a share of everything, but Frémont ordered the men to refrain from trading or giving them a single article. On learning this, they threatened to attack, but he was not in the least alarmed. They were presently

pacified, and nothing further happened. With their women and children present they were not likely to bring on a fight with so large a party.

Carvalho writes enthusiastically about his chief.

> In all the varied scenes of vicissitude, of suffering and excitement . . . during a voyage when the natural character of a man is sure to be developed, Col. Frémont never forgot he was a gentleman; not an oath, no boisterous ebullitions of temper. . . . Calmly and collectedly he gave his orders, and they were invariably fulfilled to the utmost of the men's abilities. . . . He would often entertain us [before the extreme hardships began] with his adventures on different expeditions. . . . Although on the mountains and away from civilisation, Col. Frémont's lodge was sacred from all and everything that was immodest, light, or trivial; each and all of us entertained the highest regard for him. The greatest etiquette and deference were always paid to him, although he never ostensibly required it. Yet his reserved and unexceptionable deportment demanded from us the same respect with which we were always treated and which we ever took pleasure in reciprocating.[1]

Some thirty miles beyond, where a camp was made on Grand River, fifty or sixty of the Utes came riding threateningly, armed with rifles and bows. They also demanded pay for the horse the Delawares had killed, insisting that it had not belonged to the other party. Frémont, again remaining out of sight, communicated through Carvalho, and believing the Indians had very little powder, he directed Carvalho, who was a fine shot, to put up a small piece of paper and impress them by firing at it with a revolver. Carvalho did this, and also allowed the Utes to try it. They realised the power of the new arms and became so much interested that they forgot all about their war threats. They were permitted to spend the night in the camp though Frémont ordered eleven men at a time on guard, fully armed.

[1] Carvalho *Travels*, etc., p. 133.

If the Indians had any intention of attack they found no opportunity and in the morning they went peacefully on their way. It is probable that they did not really intend to harm anyone, for they had been peaceable with Beale and also with Gunnison. They blustered merely to see what they could get.

The weather was extremely cold, and crossing Grand River was a difficult undertaking, particularly as there was heavy ice along the banks on both shores, the middle water running too fast to freeze. There were two hundred yards of this open water about six feet deep. Sand was spread over the surface of the ice to prevent slipping and the pack-animals were then driven in, while the riders on horseback, following Frémont's example, plunged off into the chilling flood, their clothes, saturated, freezing stiff as soon as they emerged on the farther side. The Delawares went over among the first and built a huge fire by which all dried their clothes on their persons.

Steadily their food supplies disappeared, and could not be replenished with game. Hunting is either a business or a pleasure; in either case it takes time. It became necessary to kill a horse. It was a solemn event, says Carvalho. Frémont called the men together, related how the party he sent out for relief on his last expedition "had been guilty of eating one of their own number," and vigorously condemning such an act declared: "If we are to die, let us die together like men." And he further declared that he would shoot any man that even hinted at such a proposition. The twenty-two men clasped hands and with a "So help me God!" made a compact to stand by each other to the end, whatever it might be. This dramatic scene occurred at night by the camp-fire on Eagle Tail River before they reached the Green. That night Fuller, the sentry, saw and shot a beaver which was cooked for breakfast.

Crossing the barren stretch between the Grand and the Green, which a little farther south becomes a wild bewilder-

ing labyrinth of canyons, cliffs, and multitudinous pinnacles and buttes, even now avoided, they descended at the end of January, as already mentioned, over some cliffs, to the banks of the latter river. Arriving at the water (altitude 4075 feet above sea-level) they saw on the other side a number of Indians. On crossing to them, the caravan was led to the nearby village. Here it was hoped some food might be obtained, but the Utes had only grass seed; and even this was scarce. They parted with what they could spare, and it was discovered to be highly nutritious. To this was added the meat of a lame horse purchased, and for a time, the pangs of hunger were relieved. A porcupine was shot a little later, and was consumed.

The horses and mules fared badly as they were compelled to travel during the day, and at night the snow and cold prevented their getting much, if anything, to eat. The Indian horses were in good condition, for they were not in use and they had time to browse in clear places for food. The pole of the great lodge was broken, and the men were deprived of its shelter, sleeping now in the open, covered at times with snow. But this was not as objectionable as it may sound to those who never have slept that way. Dry snow keeps one warm; I have slept with entire comfort under a foot of it. Frémont had his small skin lodge which was taken along Indian fashion, the poles dragging from a horse's neck and the skin cover laid on the poles. At last it was imperative to leave much of the baggage behind in order to make time and provide mounts for the men, twenty-seven animals having been killed for food by this time.

All instruments, extra clothes, blankets, cloth, pack-saddles, were wrapped in the large buffalo-skin covering of the great lodge and buried in the snow and covered with brush. Only necessities henceforth were to be carried and now each man once more had a mount; but Frémont still kept his own lodge.

When an animal gave out he was shot down by the Indians [Delawares] who immediately cut his throat and saved the blood in a camp kettle. . . . The animal was divided into twenty-two parts as follows: Two, for Col. Frémont and Lee, his cook; ten for the Delawares; and ten for ours. Col. Frémont, hitherto had messed with his officers; at this time he requested that we should excuse him, as it gave him pain and recalled to his mind the horrible scenes which had been enacted during his last expedition. [1]

Each animal killed was intended to serve the outfit for six meals, but some of the men ate their full allowance at once. After this every animal killed placed a man on foot, and they were killed only at regular intervals. The carcasses were utilised to the limit; even the entrails were "well shaken" and boiled with snow (they had no water) and this process produced "a highly flavoured soup, peculiar to itself. The hide was roasted so as to burn the hair and make it crisp, the hoofs and shins were disposed of by regular rotation." [2]

In this way they lived for nearly fifty days. Once they camped where there was no wood, and had no fire, starting on again next morning without the suggestion of a breakfast. Sometimes they collected cactus leaves, put them in the fire a moment to burn off the spines, and then ate them. The taste resembled "an Irish-potato peeling." Often the animals had to be watered by melting snow in the camp kettles. They were working through the Wasatch Mountains, or rather through their southern extension, now known as the High Plateaus, whose eastern and extreme southern edges form the Rim of the Basin in those quarters.

One day as they were struggling up a mountain Frémont, himself, suddenly felt his strength vanishing. He could scarcely proceed. Without mentioning his condition to anyone, he immediately declared a spot nearby to be excellent for a camp, and ordered a stop. The next morning

[1] Carvalho *Travels*, etc., p. 125. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 125–126.

he was able to go on, and his men did not know his predicament. During all this time he did not neglect his astronomical observations. No matter how cold, or how deep the snow, if conditions were otherwise favourable he would stand for hours making observations. In this work he was assisted by Carvalho. After one of these observations (evidently in Circle Valley about latitude 38° 10′, longitude, 112° 15′) he informed Carvalho that the little Mormon settlement of Parowan was beyond the mountains, immediately ahead, and that he expected to reach it in three more days. But the snow was deep in Panguitch Canyon; progress was impossible, and over the mountain the Delawares were sure no one could pass. Frémont said it must be done and he started ahead breaking a path, up the steep ascent of 45° and 1000 feet. The rest followed and at last the climb was accomplished. From the summit they saw beyond into a country of more ranges of snow-covered mountains. "For the first time," exclaims Carvalho, "my heart failed me." Not only were most of the party now on foot but they were nearly barefoot. Their feet were tied up in bits of raw hide, old cloth, or any stuff that would protect. They were all famished and near the end of human endurance except the Delawares, who, conserving their allotments of food, stood up to the privations much better than the white men, and came out of the ordeal in comparatively good condition. Probably Kit Carson, Fitzpatrick, Godey, and others of their kind would have found these hardships less destructive.

When all had rested Frémont consulted his pocket compass and, pointing in a certain direction, began the descent, and by noon they were in "a defile of the mountains." This was Frémont Pass about latitude 38° 07′, longitude, 112° 30′, and westward through it they tramped camping "about two o'clock in a valley with plenty of grass." Deer tracks were noticed which caused Frémont to offer a rifle to the man who first got a deer. After several hours, Welu-

chas, a Delaware, returned with a fine buck, and carried off the prize.

A few days before they came down into the valley, February 1, 1854, Oliver Fuller, assistant engineer began to lag. At the start he had been one of the strongest and perhaps was too lavish of his strength as generous men are apt to be. He could not keep up, and Egloffstein and Carvalho tried to help him on but this resulted only in all three being kept far back of the main body. They were all on foot. Fuller directed them to leave him, and send assistance. There was no wood for fire, so wrapping him in a blanket that he had on his back the other two started to reach camp. Snow began to fall. The night was black. It was ten o'clock before they got to the camp-fires. Frémont then sent a Mexican on horseback, with cooked meat, and a free horse to bring the disabled man to camp. The snow fell furiously. At daybreak nothing had been heard of either.

Three Delawares were sent next, and by ten o'clock one returned with the Mexican and his horse. The Mexican had been lost. Near dark the two other Delawares came with Fuller. He was almost at his last breath and badly frozen, his feet black to his ankles. Three days the party remained in this camp in the effort to revive and invigorate poor Fuller, but when they proceeded it took a Delaware on each side to hold him on the horse. Fuller died February 7th on horseback almost in sight of relief, but he was so badly frozen he probably could not have recovered. He then was wrapped in his rubber blanket and laid across the trail. Not long after this they came to the waggon-road which connected the Mormon settlements along the west flanks of the Wasatch mountains, and also led to California by the Virgin River route. The ruts were plainly indicated by depressions in the snow. A band of Utes under Wakara's brother Arapeen was met, and one of them remembering Frémont probably from his former journey through here—for he was now near his camp of May 13,

1844—presented him with a dog. This meat, with some flour traded for, gave the exhausted men a feast. The party camped and the next day, February 8th, after several miles, arrived at the town of Parowan, and there pitched camp just out of its bounds, once more in touch with homes and supplies. Parowan (altitude 5970 feet above sea) was a settlement of about a hundred families, which had been established since Frémont's passage this way on the 1843–44 trip. A party was sent back to bury Fuller and found the body undisturbed.

"Every family took in some of the men, putting them into warm rooms and clean comfortable beds, and kind-faced women gave them reviving food and pitying words. Mr. Frémont's letters could not say enough of the gentle, patient care of these kind women."[1] He appreciated so much the kindness received at this time, that he never could be induced to even appear to express any disapproval of these people, and many years later when Kate Field, a bitter opponent of Mormons, endeavoured to get Frémont to introduce her in her lecture on the subject at Los Angeles, he tried to excuse himself, but as she persisted he finally said, "I cannot do it. The Mormons saved me and mine from death by starvation in '54 and I could not introduce you."[2]

Mrs. Frémont was almost ill from anxiety during the last two weeks of the time that her husband was undergoing this severe exposure with his men, but on the night of February 6th, being kept up late by some of her young people returning from a party she was suddenly and strangely relieved of all apprehension, by a sort of telepathic communication, the story of which she relates entertainingly.[3] She believed it a distinct example of thought-transference telling her of his arrival at Parowan, and as their two minds

[1] *Far West Sketches*, by Jessie Benton Frémont—"How the Good News came out of the West."

[2] Miss Frémont's *Recollections*, p. 73.

[3] *Far West Sketches*, "How the Good News Came out of the West." See also Miss Frémont's *Recollections*.

were so thoroughly one, if such things actually occur it would have been likely to happen to them. Apparently, however, it was not the *6th* of February on which the famishing party reached Parowan, but the *8th*, according to a letter of the 9th addressed by Frémont to Benton and sent that very day by the Territorial Secretary, Babbitt, who happened to be going from Parowan to Salt Lake and Washington. In his letter to *The National Intelligencer*[1] Frémont also says he came out of the mountains on the 7th and arrived at the settlement February 8th, and Carvalho dates his sojourn at Parowan from the 8th. Fuller died on the 7th, according to Carvalho, and this was before they arrived at the settlement. If these dates are correct, the extraordinary sensations of Mrs. Frémont either did not so exactly coincide in point of time with the thoughts of her husband in far-off Parowan, or she made a mistake in stating the date of her experiences.

The party remained till the 21st, recuperating and refitting. The settlers said the winter was the most severe they had experienced here. Egloffstein and Carvalho were so badly used up that they were obliged to go to Salt Lake in a waggon, but Frémont, with a smaller retinue made ready to strike across the Great Basin deserts and the Sierra Nevada, to complete this railway survey to the Pacific.

[1] *The National Intelligencer*, June 15, 1854.

CHAPTER XX

POLITICS, WAR, AND FINANCE

No Obstacle to a Railway—Benton's Defeat—Sutter Goes Down—Frémont Continues West from Parowan—Crossing Nevada—Balked by the Sierra—Reasons for a Railway to the Pacific—Nominated for the Presidency—A Bitter Campaign—No Help from Benton—Champion of Freedom—Defeat—Mariposa Again—Fighting Claim-jumpers—Financial Complications—Bret Harte and Black Point—A Major-General—Emancipation Proclamation—Relieved of Command—The Virginia Campaign—Mariposa Revived—Frémont Loses—A Major-General once more—Across the Range—New York's Monument.

ALTHOUGH Mrs. Frémont's mind was relieved by the strange occurrences which she so entertainingly writes about, the general public was of the impression that Frémont and his whole party, not having been heard from for so long, had been annihilated by the winter storms in the wilderness. It was not till Babbitt on his way east by way of Panama published in California, in April, 1854, an account of his meeting with the explorers, that the people understood the situation. Carvalho had written East and this information was printed in a Philadelphia paper about the same time. *The National Intelligencer* of April 12, 1854, printed Frémont's letter to Benton, congratulating Benton on the verification which this expedition had made of his judgment concerning obstacles, in winter, to the operation of a trans-continental railway. The advocacy of such a railway neither Benton nor Frémont had ever neglected. They both believed it in every respect entirely practicable and met every doubter with definite information; and now Frémont had settled the question of snow blockade. Later he wrote: "From the day when my connection with

the army was dissolved, I have considered my life consecrated to the construction of this Pacific Road."[1]

Benton, however, was no longer able to keep the idea before Congress from the vantage ground of a senator, for, owing to his opposition to slavery, the people of Missouri, even after all his admirable service for thirty years, deliberately refused to send him back; a forerunner of the storm which, before long, was to rack and rend to its foundations the republic from sea to sea. Those who declared slavery wrong were charged with doing it from a wicked desire to disrupt the country, and Benton though one of the greatest, most patriotic men of his time, outranking, in some respects, even Webster and Clay, was made to feel the blighting power of the pro-slavery element.[2] With regard to western lands, he certainly possessed wider vision than any other American, and as we have seen, it was largely due to his enthusiasm, force, and intelligence, that the country was examined by Frémont, and that Frémont was on the ground when it was possible he would be needed. While Benton opposed forcible acquisition of California, he did not intend to let it slip when opportunity came. Frémont was to take such steps in 1846 as he deemed necessary and his resignation was sent, in a timely way, to Benton, to enable the government if found expedient to disavow his acts.

Frémont had failed of re-election to the Senate from California because of his opposition to slavery; and the slavery question was rapidly becoming the political guillotine of many men who opposed it. Even those who apparently escaped destruction at the time were often followed by a vague public dislike and denunciation, both North and South, to their very graves.

Another of the important characters that have moved before us in this life drama of Western Expansion, was now

[1] Letter to Thomas Starr King, Sept. 4, 1856.

[2] For Benton's career see: *The Life of Thomas Hart Benton*, by William M. Meigs, Phila., 1904, and also Theodore Roosevelt's *Thomas Hart Benton*, 1887.

meeting with adverse circumstances though, in his case, slavery ideas were not a factor. This was John A. Sutter, the once good friend of everybody, and everybody's friend. His biographer says, "he was bankrupted by thieves." He was caught between the technicalities of the law, like Daniel Boone. Not knowing exactly where his granted bounds were, and being unable for so long, through the dilatory action of the American usurpers to find out, he conveyed more land than he could establish ownership to under the new rulings, and the settlement of the claims consumed his fortune. "Despoiled of his estates and his flocks, and becoming financially involved in his land suits, his credit became impaired . . . till he finally, as the sad act of his life, mortgaged away his Hock farm."[1] Generous to the last degree with every man; having helped unrecorded numbers in multitudinous and vital ways; having been the sheet-anchor and the strong refuge of hundreds in the beginnings of California; this excellent man, at last, was obliged to turn his back on his chosen state and end his hampered days in a small hamlet of the East. Justice seems not only blind but sometimes a cormorant of avarice. Frémont, despite the blows which he and his father-in-law, Benton, had suffered, still retained enthusiasm and optimism. He believed he could accomplish the solution of the problem of a transcontinental railway, as no one else could, and it may be stated here that almost every railway survey across the western region followed near one, or the other, of his own early exploring trails, and that the lines operating to-day are frequently built along these trails, no line as yet, however, having been built on his present route. In 1848 he had made a proposition to Congress to continue his explorations and surveys but though reported favourably by the committee with a motion to appropriate $30,000 it was not authorised.[2]

[1] *The Life and Times of John A. Sutter*, by T. J. Schoonover. Sacramento, 1907, p. 216.

[2] For text of the committee's report see Bigelow's *Life*, Appendix A, p. 467.

From Parowan, two routes

suggested themselves to me for examination; one directly across the plateau, between the 37th and 38th parallels, the other keeping to the south of the mountains, and following for about two hundred miles down a valley of Rio Virgen—Virgin River—thence direct to the Tejon Pass at the head of the San Joaquin Valley.[1]

As this route had been examined the year before by a Mormon party, and as he had come up that way in 1844, he decided to take the more direct way, especially as the Mormons told him that all their efforts in that direction had failed for want of water, and he "determined to examine it in the interest of geography." He therefore proceeded about eighteen miles south to another new Mormon settlement called Cedar City, at the south-eastern side of the Escalante Desert, making no effort to send back for the goods he recently had cached in the mountains. Carvalho came this way a few weeks later and described Cedar City as having a thousand population, with an adobe wall twelve feet high completely surrounding it. Carvalho was on his way with a party of Mormon missionaries, to California by the Virgin River route, the missionaries destined for the Sandwich Islands, and he "daguerreotyped" as he went, sketching also.

From Cedar City Frémont, for a short distance, followed the California Road and then struck west across the Escalante desert, into the Unknown. Snow fell occasionally, during the next month, sometimes accompanied by hail and thunder, but there was no snow on the valley bottoms, and that which fell melted away rapidly as soon as the storm ceased. They came to the present west boundary of Utah at about the 38th parallel, and entered the table-land of Nevada

bristling with mountains, often in short isolated blocks and sometimes accumulated into considerable ranges, with numerous open and low passes. We were thus always in a valley and

[1] Letter of June 13, 1854, to *The National Intelligencer.*

always surrounded by mountains more or less closely, which apparently altered in shape and position as we advanced. The valleys are dry and naked without water or wood; but the mountains are generally covered with grass and well wooded with pines. Springs are very rare and occasionally small streams are at remote distances. Not a human being was encountered between the Santa Clara Road near the Mormon settlements and the Sierra Nevada, over a distance of more than three hundred miles. Commencing at the 38th we struck the Sierra Nevada on about the 37th parallel about March 15th.

This crossing of Nevada began not far from the present town of Pioche (altitude above sea 6000 feet), and continued on rather a straight course south-westerly to a little north of Thorp, on the Las Vegas and Tonopah railway. Thence they went south meeting the California boundary, at about the 37th parallel, on March 15, 1854. Continuing westward to the first range of the Sierra they climbed on March 16th and 17th to an altitude of 8000 or 9000 feet to be blocked in that direction by deep snow as Frémont had anticipated they probably would be, as he knew very well, of course, what might be expected. Having no object in forcing a passage, he consequently returned to the valley and bore sharply to the south, not far out from the eastern foot of the Sierra, to reach a lower portion in that direction. In this region they attacked a party of Indians and took their horses, the Indians escaping. Travelling about sixty or eighty miles south he looked for a pass, knowing that if he did not find one he could go over by "either of Walker's passes" evidently meaning Walker's Pass or the Tehachapi.[1] He found numerous openings, and as the party, by this time, was entirely out of provisions and living on horse meat, he took the first pass that offered. This appears to have been a little south of Walker Pass. By an open and level hollow

[1] He seems not yet to have discovered that Walker's northern pass led into the Yosemite Valley, and that Tehachapi was not one of Walker's passes—that is, not one he had discovered.

Early San Francisco
From Meyer's *Universum*

thirteen miles long, probably Bird Spring Canyon, they went over to a small branch of Kern River, "the hollow and the valley making together a way where a waggon would not find any obstruction for forty miles." There was no snow in this pass. Spring flowers were blooming and, so far as winter was concerned, their difficulties were ended. He was certain that nothing existed on the route he had followed through from the Arkansas, to prevent the building and operating of a railway.

> It seems a treason [he declared] against mankind and the spirit of progress which marks the age to refuse to put this one completing link to our national prosperity, and the civilisation of the world. Europe still lies between Asia and America; build this railroad and things will have revolved about; America will lie between Asia and Europe—the golden vein which runs through the history of the world will follow the iron track to San Francisco.[1]

About the first of May he arrived at San Francisco and was there tendered a public dinner which he declined as he desired to leave for Washington and New York where he arrived, by way of the Isthmus (which now had a railway), in May, 1854, to lay his plans and reports before Congress. In the spring of 1855 he went to New York with his family, and his name began to be mentioned for the Presidency. During the winter of 1855 and 1856 he worked constantly at the studio of the photographer Brady, helping to make into photographs the daguerre plates which Carvalho had taken, and the painter Hamilton, of Philadelphia, had a room in his house where he reproduced some of the views in oil colours. George Childs was to publish the story of the various expeditions, but Frémont now found no time for writing. The contract was at length cancelled, though the material was carefully preserved.

In April of 1856 Frémont was invited to attend a public

[1] Letter of June 13, 1854, to *The National Intelligencer*.

meeting in New York to secure an expression of opinion on the events taking place in Kansas, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, now matters of general history, connected with the anti-slavery agitation and not necessary to enter into here.

Owing to other engagements he was not able to accept, but he wrote, saying:

> I heartily concur in all movements which have for their object 'to repair the mischief arising from the violation of good faith in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.' I am opposed to slavery in the abstract and upon principle, sustained and made habitual by long settled convictions. While I feel inflexible in the belief that it ought not to be interfered with where it exists, under the shield of State Sovereignty, I am as inflexibly opposed to its extension on this continent beyond its present limits.

It was said that Governor Floyd of Virginia in 1855, on behalf of the Democratic party, offered him the Presidential nomination. Frémont said the repeal of the Missouri Compromise made it impossible for him to consider it from that party.

On the 17th, 18th, and 19th of June, 1856, a convention, assembled at Musical Fund Hall in Philadelphia, of representatives of those opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; to the policy of the existing Administration; to the extension of slavery into free territory; and in favour of the admission of Kansas as a free State; nominated on June 18th, John C. Frémont, for President. The pro-slavery parties had already nominated two separate tickets, Fillmore and Donelson; and Buchanan and Breckenridge.[1] The New York *Times* of June 19, 1856, said:

> The Path-Finder of the Rocky Mountains, the chivalric John C. Frémont, the type and embodiment of the spirit of

[1] [Ex-]Commodore R. F. Stockton was also nominated but deemed it wise to retire. He had first been pitted against Buchanan as a candidate.

Young America, was yesterday afternoon nominated on the first ballot, by the Republican Convention in Philadelphia, as their candidate for the Presidency. At the first trial he received nearly two thirds of the whole vote of the convention, and was then nominated by unanimous consent. Such a degree of unanimity and enthusiasm as this has had no example in the political history of the country. . . .

William L. Dayton, Senator of the United States, was named for vice-president, Abraham Lincoln having been his competitor. And thus the new Republican party put forth its first candidates for these great offices. Abraham Lincoln was at the head of the Frémont electoral ticket for Illinois, and made about fifty speeches in all parts of the State. If anyone expected Thomas H. Benton to support his son-in-law in this three-sided race, he was disappointed. Benton was too loyal a Democrat to desert his party under any circumstances. In a speech delivered as candidate for governor of Missouri, he declared:

I will assist the new president (for I look upon Mr. Buchanan's election as certain) in doing what I am sure he will do, that is to say, all in his power to preserve the peace of the country at home and abroad, and to restore the fraternal feelings between the different sections of the Union now so lamentably impaired. . . . It is unnecessary for me to speak of these [other] parties: I adhere to my own, and support it, and that to the exclusion of all the rest. One only I allude to—one with which the name of a member of my family is connected, and in reference to which some persons who judge me by themselves . . . attribute to me a sinister connection . . . I am above family and above self, when the good of the Union is concerned.[1]

"The Frémont ratification meeting in Newark, N. J., on

[1] From speech at the Buchanan ratification meeting, St. Louis, June 21, 1856,—reported in New York *Times*, June 27th. In response to a request for material to be used in preparing a memoir of Frémont, Benton replied to the New York *Times*, "As I am entirely opposed to that movement, I can do nothing to promote it in any way." New York *Times*, Aug. 19, 1856.

Monday evening," says the New York *Herald* of Thursday, July 3, 1856, "was the most enthusiastic political gathering which has been called together since the days of 'Tippecanoe and Tyler too.' "Fremont and Victory' was the cry."[1]

Fillmore repeatedly declared that "in the event of the election of Colonel Frémont to the Presidency, the Southern States in a body, ought to, and will, withdraw from the Union."[2] Preston Brooks said the issue was Union or Disunion. Frémont was charged with being a sectional candidate, the nominee of the abolitionists, and Buchanan, Slidell, and Toombs, were exactly of the same mind as Fillmore, and Brooks; in fact the entire body of Southern politicans was practically unanimous in this attitude. The fight waxed more and more bitter. Frémont, on the one side, was regarded as a traitor endeavouring to destroy the Union, his anti-slavery attitude a mere pretext; on the other as a bulwark to prevent the expansion of slavery; by the extreme abolitionists as one who would immediately rend the shackles and decree Emancipation. The former, and indeed all his opponents, found no charge too reckless, no lies or slanders too despicable, for their presentation. Seldom has a campaign been marked by more wretched "mud-slinging" as it is called, though all the candidates themselves were dignified. Besides Lincoln, many men later prominent in the Union cause "took the stump" for Frémont. Among these was Whitelaw Reid, then editor of the Xenia (Ohio) *News*.

The enthusiasm for Frémont was, of course, confined to the northern, non-slave States, and even there largely to one class, for the Democrats of that section of the Republic had not yet found themselves unequivocally on the side of anti-slavery and the Union, as they so admirably did a few years later. But at the same time, it is certain that

[1] For letter of acceptance dated July 8, 1856, see Bigelow's *Life*, p. 456 *et seq.*

[2] Editorial New York *Herald*, July 13, 1856.

Colonel Frémont Riding the "Abolition Nag," Led by Seward, to Salt River

An example of the campaign cartoons of 1856, when Frémont ran against two other candidates, Buchanan and Fillmore, for President of the United States

Print Collection, New York Library

there were a great many people in the South who were opposed to slavery, but who were whipped into line, or into silence, by the politicians, especially after the election of 1860. The Republicans sang many ringing campaign songs:

Champion of Freedom! Hail to thee!
A million eyes with pride will flame,
To see the Goddess Liberty,
Adorn her standard with thy name,
That glorious flag of stripes and stars,
Borne westward by thy daring hand,
Through tempests and o'er mountain bars,
And planted on Pacific's strand.

Columbus of the golden West,
As he returned from Salvador,
So thou by jealousy oppressed,
The path of honour travelled o'er,
But Time is just, and Glory now,
With busy fingers, joyful weaves
A diadem to grace thy brow,
Of mystic boughs and laurel leaves, etc.

The most famous brought in the phrase, "Free soil, free men, and Frémont":

All hail to Fremont! swell the lofty acclaim
Like winds from the mountain, like prairies aflame!
Once more the Pathfinder is forth on his hunt,
Clear the way for free soil, for free men, and Fremont!

We 'll spurn every fetter, we 'll break every rod,
And Kansas shall bloom like the Garden of God,
When we plant the white banner of Freedom upon 't,
And cry, "To the rescue, free men and Fremont!"

Oh! the land that we love shall be sacred from slaves
From the tyrant's misrule, and the plunder of knaves,
We 'll baptise the Union in Liberty's font,
And the faith of our Fathers shall live with Fremont! etc.

And Mrs. Frémont came in for her share of songs:

She 's wise and she 's prudent; she 's good and she 's bonnie;
For virtue and valour she takes a brave stand,
For the Chieftain's White Mansion, she 's better than onie,
So give her "God Speed" there the flower o' the land, etc.

It was at this time that Frémont was charged with being a Catholic because he put a cross on Independence Rock, and for other equally foolish reasons, there being at that time an objection against Catholics in public office, fostered by the Know-nothing party. He declined to make his religion a matter of politics. Ramsay Crooks wrote a letter to the newspapers denouncing Frémont's pretensions to being the discoverer of South Pass when he had never made any such pretensions. Somebody else said he was born in Montreal; and so it was all along the line. Every shred of his past, present, and future was magnified a thousand diameters, misrepresented, and torn to bits, by the opposition, while the other side exaggerated his "Pathfinding" experience. At this time he lived at 56 West 9th Street, New York. One of a visiting delegation thus describes him:

In the midst of the group sat a small, intense, earnest, determined looking man, who bore the traces of hardships and toil, yet his countenance beamed with such an expression of good nature that it seemed to preserve a magnetic attraction for his guests. . . . His hair, parted down the middle[1] swept in graceful luxuriance over his broad, high, temples; his feet were encased in a pair of light slippers; he wore neither suspenders nor vest, and his coat was of calico thrown carelessly across his shoulders. . . . Intelligence was breathed in every utterance; resolution was portrayed upon every feature; modesty, ability, integrity

[1] Mrs. Frémont said he never parted his hair, and he generally did not, but at times it is plain that he parted it in the middle. There is a story that Benton at first objected to him as a prospective son-in-law on this account. Parting a man's hair in the middle was little short of a crime in the Far West in early days.

were written as plainly as the alphabet upon the whole man. . . . I have yet to see an engraving of Frêmont that does him justice. The features may be faithfully delineated, but his eye—I never saw one with such an earnest expression, such a vivid intensity.[1]

Another visitor said:

The prints fall exceedingly short of doing justice to his appearance . . . utterly fail to give one the idea of that rare union of gentleness, refinement, and delicacy, with resolute energy and firmness, which are so remarkable in his features and in the expression of his countenance. His whole air and manner, tones and voice and way of speaking are those of a quiet, modest, gentle, and sincere, yet firm and earnest man, in whom the intellectual and moral faculties are in fine harmony. . . .[2]

Carl Schurz declares:

The Republican platform sounded to me like a bugle call of liberty, and the name of Frémont, the Pathfinder, surrounded by a halo of adventurous heroism, mightily stirred the imagination. Thus the old cause of human freedom was to be fought for on the soil of the new world. The great final decision seemed to be impending. . . . When, after the November election, the returns had all come in—I would not abandon hope until I had seen them all—and our defeat was certain, I felt as if I had suffered an immeasurable personal misfortune.[3]

The late John Bigelow, who wrote the excellent *Life and Services of John C. Frémont* for the New York *Evening Post*, as a campaign document (printed at the rate of two or three columns a week), called on Frémont at the Metropolitan Hotel with several others, prospective of the nomination.

Many years afterward he wrote:

[1] Letter in the New York *Times*, October 30, 1856.

[2] C. S. Henry to General Swift, New York *Times*, October 9, 1856.

[3] *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, 1829–1863, N. Y., 1907, vol. ii., pp. 67 and 71.

He impressed me more favourably than I had expected. His manner was refined and dignified. . . . I am persuaded now, as I was then, that it was impossible to have selected another equally available candidate for our purpose.

I became as fully convinced before the colonel died that, much as the country was to be congratulated for his nomination, it was equally to be congratulated upon his defeat. He was in no proper sense a statesman. He owed such success as he had at this election—and it was very flattering—largely to his wife, a remarkably capable and accomplished woman; to her father, through whose influence with the Democratic portion of the coalition he was naturally expected to profit and his utterly neuter gender in politics. He rendered his country as a candidate all the service he was capable of rendering it, by incarnating in that character the principles of the Free Soil Party, and thus combining in the free states the forces upon which the perpetuity of our Union was to be dependent, and the doctrine of popular sovereignty vindicated as it had never been before. He lived long enough, however, to satisfy everyone that he might have proved a disastrous failure as a president. A wedge may be useful in splitting a log but useless in converting either of its parts into a chest of drawers.[1]

One hesitates to differ from so distinguished an authority as John Bigelow, but I venture to think he is not entirely right on some of these points. As for the influence of Benton, I have previously quoted directly from him to show that he was absolutely opposed to Frémont in this campaign, and refused any aid to him or his party. While Mrs. Frémont was exactly the accomplished and capable woman Bigelow says, Frémont's success, in this matter, was due mainly to the way in which his extraordinary Western experiences stirred the imagination; there seems to be no question about this. He was a "neuter gender" in politics only because he was the first candidate of a party which was as much of a "neuter gender" then as was its candidate. The latter

[1] *Retrospections of an Active Life*, by John Bigelow. New York, 1909, p. 142.

declared himself as distinctly as possible on the issues before the country. He *might* have made a poor President but he could hardly have been worse than Buchanan, who was elected in place of him. The war of four years later probably would have occurred on Frémont's election.[1] On the other hand the politicians of the South would hardly then have been sufficiently coherent to have coerced all the people of the South as they did later; the States which came near remaining with the North possibly *might* have done so; Frémont's and Benton's plan of leaving slavery alone in all the States where it had been established and prohibiting it in all new territory might have been carried through, in which case there *might* have been no war at all. It must be remembered that there were few slaveholders (347,525) in the South as compared with the whole southern people, and it was the slaveholders' cry of States' rights which stirred the non-slaveholders to action. At any rate speculation on a favourable turn if Frémont had been elected, is just as sensible as taking the pessimistic side. There was much in his favour.

But Frémont was defeated as it was likely he would be with all the southern politicians against him. He polled about 500,000 fewer votes than Buchanan, or 1,341,264, carrying all but five of the "free" States. These five went to Buchanan with fourteen slave States, while Fillmore got only one State and that one a slave State.

I have no space to go further into the Presidential campaign of this year, nor is it necessary in this volume to do so. Frémont took his defeat philosophically. He was even now only 43 years old and had other matters to look after. The following spring, 1857, he went with his family to Paris, but after a brief stay he returned and proceeded to California

[1] "Had he been elected, the war would probably have broken out then, instead of four years later." Rossiter Johnson, *A History of the War of Secession*, p. 23. Secession was in the air, but if the matter of slavery in the western territory could have been adjusted there would have been no war.

by Panama. He took up his residence, accompanied by his wife and children, on the Mariposa estate, in a portion called Bear Valley, which was also the name of a settlement there. They expected to remain at Mariposa about three months—for Mrs. Frémont it was to be a pleasant summer camp experience—and then the plan was to return to Paris to remain three years.

A great shock now came to Mrs. Frémont in the death of her father, April 10, 1858. A peak was named Mount Bullion in his honour, he having had the political nickname of "Old Bullion."

Before leaving California on January 21, 1852, Frémont had filed his claim to the Mariposa grant, according to American law, with the Commissioners appointed to adjudicate these claims, and in December of the same year his title was confirmed. But the next year, 1853, Caleb Cushing became Attorney-General under Pierce, and, through the District Court, he caused the decision of the Commission to be reversed on a number of grounds: no surveys; no plan; no occupation; no confirmation by the proper public authority; no performance of any of the conditions precedent or subsequent to the grant. Frémont appealed to the United States Supreme Court which ruled in his favour holding that, "the purchase was perfectly consistent with the rights and duties of Colonel Frémont," and that "upon the whole it is the opinion of the court that the claim of the petitioner is valid, and ought to be confirmed," and it was so confirmed.[1] A patent was therefore issued to him in 1856.

When it came to the survey, Frémont wanted the claim to extend along both banks of the river in a long strip, inasmuch as the grant was indefinite, and choice of bounds was very wide, but the surveyor held that it must be in compact form. Frémont, then, instead of taking a compact

[1] Bigelow's *Life*, p. 385, and Howard's *United States Supreme Court Reports*, vol. vii., pp. 564–5.

area of grazing land and mountain together, "swung his grant round and covered the valuable Pine Tree and Josephine mines, near the Merced River, besides a number of others which had been in undisputed possession of miners, who had long been familiar with Frémont, and had never heard the least intimation from him that he would in any event lay claim to their works."[1] This is the report of the examiner. I have nothing from Frémont's side of the case and we cannot be sure that the statement is correct.

To further complicate the situation was the fact that the Mexican law did not convey the gold, or other minerals, with any land grant. The American law had not yet decided this point. From this condition of things Frémont soon found himself in a state of serious warfare. The miners defied him and his claims, the officers of the law, and everybody who interfered with their operations. A law had been passed in California making it legal to "jump" a claim, under certain conditions, and under this Frémont for the time being lost some of the claims, especially the "Black Drift" where the guard was bribed to be absent long enough to permit the opposition to enter. The mines were converted into fortifications. The Pine Tree, in Frémont's possession, was besieged. A hundred men camped before its entrance to starve the miners out. Several men were killed. A notice was served on Mrs. Frémont, her husband being absent, at the mine, that the house would be burned in twenty-four hours, and if she did not leave it, the house would be burned over her head, and the Colonel would be killed. If she left, she would be escorted safely out of the valley.

Mrs. Frémont was too much like her father to be easily defeated; she replied that the house and the land were theirs and they intended to remain; that if the house was burned they would camp on the land and if driven off they would sell to a corporation, which would make a more decided fight. Frémont, fearing drunkenness more than any

[1] *The Mariposa Estate.* J. Ross Browne, 1868, p. 6.

other factor, took steps to prevent all liquors from reaching the mines, and tried in every way to keep the disturbance on a reasoning basis. While he was busy with this, Mrs. Frémont succeeded in secretly dispatching at night, the only available person, a young English boy, as a messenger to Coulterville, whence he was to send someone on to the city of Stockton to secure aid from the State. The Coulterville "Home Guard" marched at once for the scene, and the State marshal soon arrived with 500 armed men. The Frémont residence appeared like a fort in war time. This ended the trouble.

"But at last, in 1859, Frémont triumphed, and under his Mexican grant obtained land which the Mexican government did not intend to grant, and minerals which it systematically reserved," says Ross Browne, but we must remember this was no longer Mexican territory, and matters were not decided by Mexican law. Frémont was the *bona fide* owner by a decree of the United States Supreme Court. There is, therefore, nothing more to say about his title. The final government decision (1859) that minerals went with land was contrary to the Mexican law, too, but no one doubts the authority of the United States to make its own laws. The Mexican régime was overthrown when the Americans boxed up the records.

Soon after the title was settled the yield of gold from the lode or quartz mines of the Mariposa reached a *monthly* average (in 1860) of $39,500, and in 1863, about $100,000 monthly. The total yield of gold in all California up to 1856 was about $450,000,000, that is in about eight years, and since that time the yield and the values of everything in California have been enormous. Frémont had at least assisted prominently in adding this wealth to the country.

But all Frémont's labours to develop and hold the Mariposa estate, harassed as he had been by so many difficulties, and by his failure to achieve the Presidency,—candidates find "running" costly—produced financial embarrassment. He

had also insufficient capital, and quartz mines in the beginning eat up capital. A judgment was obtained against him for a large amount, and on the 9th of September, 1859, the sheriff sold out the estate to the plaintiff, Francisco O'Campo. On the 7th of February, 1860, O'Campo assigned to Mark Brumagim, of San Francisco, Frémont's chief creditor, and February 22, 1860, Brumagim made an agreement to give Frémont a deed of seven-eighths of the property on the delivery of a certain amount of gold and other conditions. With the sheriff's sale, all the foreign companies having leaseholds apparently went up in the air.[1]

The nervous strain at the Mariposa had been too much for Mrs. Frémont and she and the family were taken down to San Francisco, which the Vigilance Committee by this time had rendered a tolerably decent place of residence. But as soon as she was well she insisted on returning to Mariposa. In 1859, Frémont had bought twelve acres two miles from the Golden Gate for $42,000. This was at Black Point, where Mrs. Frémont had found a home which delighted her, "a tiny cottage built on the edge of the bluff, on a small point projecting out into the Bay, just across the channel from Alcatraz Island."[2] It was such a place as Frémont had often had in mind during the long, hard, journeys across the mountains, and here in 1860 they made a comfortable home. Her father being gone, Mrs. Frémont had no desire to go back to Washington. Starr King was a frequent visitor and he named the cottage, the "Lodge by the Golden Gate"; and here also on Sundays, a shy, clever young fellow, a compositor on *The Golden Era*, and a contributor thereto, brought his manuscripts, and in him, Mrs. Frémont, with her fine artistic sense, discovered the flame of genius. Others

[1] There was no question as to the richness of the estate. Professor Whitney said of it: "The quantity of material which can be mined may, without exaggeration, be termed inexhaustible." Professor Silliman said: "The estate is one of very great value, but also in a great degree undeveloped and demanding a large amount of active capital for its proper management."

[2] Miss Frémont's *Recollections*.

did not see it then, but justifying her confidence, the name of Bret Harte, at length, went round the world. He was only about twenty-two when Mrs. Frémont first helped him in her generous way. Among other things she secured for him through Beale, Surveyor-general, a government position at $2500 a year, and later got him admitted to the circle of *Atlantic* authors with his "Legend of Monte Diablo."

He became editor of *The Californian* and of *The Overland Monthly*. His *Plain Language from Truthful James* lifted him high, and people were captivated by *Mliss*, *Two Saints of the Foothills*, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, and all the rest we now so well know, thoroughly saturated with the essence of early California. He was another Pathfinder in the West; Frémont blazed the trail of Empire; Bret Harte the trail of Literature. "Mark Twain" was a close second on this trail with *The Jumping Frog*, etc.

Frémont now went East again, 1861, leaving his family in the Lodge by the Golden Gate, and not long after Mrs. Frémont was run away with, and injured, the horses dashing down "Russian Hill." Frémont was in London, April 13th, when the cannon of his own State, South Carolina, opened fire on Sumter and the Union. Like Benton, Frémont was for the Union once and forever, and though Benton's voice was stilled, Frémont's was heard with the patriotic ring it always had, for no matter what else may be said of him it must be admitted he was patriotic. His Mariposa complications for the time being were ignored. He acted as agent, purchased arms for the government, and returned to accept a general's commission in the Union army. Meanwhile Mrs. Frémont having, after several weeks, recovered from the effects of the runaway, rented the Lodge, and came east via Panama, the vessel up the Atlantic having an exciting race with a rebel privateer, and winning. Major-General Frémont was assigned to the command of the Department of the West with headquarters at St. Louis. He chose the manorial

Brant House. Mrs. Frémont with the children came to St. Louis also. They were regarded by many of their old acquaintances with bitter dislike, for St. Louis at first was largely in sympathy with the South. General Frémont assumed command July 25, 1861. He declared martial law which F. P. Blair, Jr.,[1] his one-time friend, claimed was unjustifiable, "the offspring of timidity"; but Missouri was on the border line and St. Louis undoubtedly, for some months at least, was full of Southern sympathisers. General Frémont found everything in a confused and disorganised condition. One of his defenders, Brotherhood, declares:

> When Frémont took command of the Department of the West, it is well known everything was in a chaotic state. Floyd and the other thieves had managed to steal all our arms, etc. . . . He bought arms, built barracks, organised his army, fortified St. Louis, issued contracts to build iron-clad gunboats, and designed a new style of mortar boats.[2]

Like McClellan he was an organiser. He was preparing for real war, not for a ninety days' insurrection.

Blair, on the other hand, charged that General Frémont spent money wastefully on fortifications which Blair declared were unnecessary, and Blair also charged insubordination, as Frémont did not stop building the forts when ordered to do so. Frémont tried to confine the war activities to the regular soldiers of both sides, and to eliminate unauthorised, semi-guerilla warfare, at that moment active in Missouri. To this end he entered into direct negotiation with Price, the Confederate general, who agreed with him, on these points:

1. No arrests or interference with citizens for their opinions.
2. Families broken up by the military to be re-united.

[1] *Speech of F. P. Blair, Jr.*, House of Rep., March 7, 1862.

[2] *General Frémont and the Injustice Done him by Politicians and Envious Military Men*, by William Brotherhood. Phila., 1862.

3. The war to be confined to armies in the field.

A joint proclamation to this effect was issued. Both generals desired to cause as little damage as possible to the population, and to the property of non-combatants. But for those who took up arms against the Union, General Frémont prepared another proclamation which he issued August 30, 1861, and which contained this important clause among many others:

> The property, real and personal, of all persons in the state of Missouri who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken an active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared freemen.[1]

This was the first emancipation proclamation ever issued in the United States. It naturally created a sensation. The abolitionists were jubilant. The others defiant. Lincoln considered it premature; it did not fit his plans. He requested its modification; Frémont demurred. Lincoln then ordered the repeal and this order was considered, by the abolitionists, a pro-slavery act and much bewailed. In opposing the re-nomination of President Lincoln, Wendell Phillips said:

> If I turn to General Frémont I see a man whose first act was to use the freedom of the negro as his weapon; I see one whose thorough loyalty to democratic institutions, without regard to race, whose earnest and decisive character, whose clear-sighted statesmanship and rare military ability, justify my confidence that in his hands all will be done to save the State, that foresight, decision, and statesmanship can do.

With disgust Garrison exclaimed: "He [Lincoln] has evidently not a drop of anti-slavery blood in his veins."

[1] *Official Records, War of the Rebellion*, vol. iii., p. 467. Professor Royce, *California*, p. 177, calls this a "bombastic proclamation characterised by effrontery and hypocrisy."

J. C. Fremont

From a painting in 1862 by Alonzo Chappell after a recent photograph

But Lincoln considered his paramount duty the saving of the Union not the abolition of slavery. Later General Hunter and other generals brought up the same question by orders similar to Frémont's.

General Frémont contended that "if the slaves were confiscated they must either be free, or the United States must enslave them." This was logical enough, but the great Captain, after numerous consultations with Frémont's superiors, decided to remove him on the charge of "incompetency," and on October 24, 1861 this was done. It is interesting to note that General U. S. Grant was one of Frémont's subordinates, during the Hundred Days.

No doubt General Frémont was open to criticism in this, and other matters, but it seems not to have been proven that he would not have "made good" if he had been retained in that field. "General Frémont was made the scapegoat."[1] Even General Grant was later criticised unfairly and he said: "Because I would not divulge my ultimate plans to visitors, they pronounced me idle, incompetent, and unfit to command men in an emergency and clamoured for my removal."[2] Charges of incompetency were the fad of the hour. In fact the Union forces were still not coherent throughout 1861; they had not learned the science of invasion.

John G. Whittier, the "Quaker Poet," was inspired to write on Frémont:

> Thy error, Fremont, simply was to act
> A brave man's part, without the statesman's tact,
> And, taking counsel but of common sense,
> To strike at cause as well as consequence.

Frémont had brought together on his staff a number of foreign officers of whom Major Charles Zagonyi was most

[1] *The Civil War from a Southern Standpoint*, by W. R. Garrett and R. A. Halley, p. 113.

[2] *Personal Memoirs* vol. i., p. 458.

prominent, a brave Hungarian, devoted to his general, and commander of the bodyguard. Zagonyi made a wonderful, a sort of Balaklava, charge on Springfield, Missouri, and was badly cut to pieces. F. P. Blair condemned Frémont unsparingly for ordering this charge, but the enemy had been reinforced *after* Zagonyi was sent out. Frémont writes: "He went right on, and, I am afraid, will be rash. I sent forward immediately eight hundred cavalry and a section of artillery." Zagonyi had begged permission to make this move. "At last he gave his permission," says Zagonyi, "if I take some additional help."[1]

Frémont's plan seems to have been to move gradually down on New Orleans occupying the country as he went, but of course this meant a well-equipped army and thorough defences behind him, as well as numerous gunboats on the Mississippi. He had barely begun his operations when he was removed.

General Frémont has been condemned for trying at this time to be exclusive; unapproachable. The free-born American was then accustomed to walk at liberty into anybody's office or sanctorum, with no formality. When he ran up against a guard demanding his business with the General, he not only did not like it, but considered himself insulted. Few generals, editors, or business men to-day allow visitors freely to enter their offices and take up their time needlessly, but General Frémont never was forgiven for this innovation. He has even been drawn in a modern novel as a prig and a *poseur*.[2] But he was trying to get some order out of chaos; trying to get arms for his men; and ammunition; and his officers were working hard.

It is not my intention to go into the military career of General Frémont more than to round out this account of him, in a general way. His "Hundred Days in Missouri"

[1] See *The Story of the Guard; a Chronicle of the War*, by Jessie Benton Frémont. Boston, 1863, pp. 123–124.

[2] *The Crisis*, by Winston Churchill. p. 360.

were favourably written up for a magazine, and also were condemned severely, especially by the pro-slavery element. In all the charges and counter-charges it is difficult to follow the truth.

The President gave him a command in Virginia, as it would not have been politic to drop him entirely, and in 1862 he co-operated with Banks against Stonewall Jackson. "But in that sphere of action," says Carl Schurz, "he was no more fortunate." Schurz had been assigned to the division under his command. The difficulty of approach was continued.

He was surrounded [says Schurz] by a body guard consisting mostly of Hungarians, brave soldiers who on occasion did excellent service, but who also contributed much to the somewhat unusual "style" which was kept up at Frémont's headquarters. As I afterwards observed Frémont himself had a taste for that sort of thing. When I was finally introduced by Colonel Zagonyi, one of the Hungarian aides-de-camp, the General received me kindly and at once promised to have a suitable command arranged for me without delay. It was my first meeting with Frémont. I saw before me a man of middle stature, elegant build, muscular and elastic, dark hair and beard slightly streaked with gray, a broad forehead, a keen eye, fine regular features. It has been said that there was much of the charlatan in him, but his appearance at that time certainly betrayed nothing of the kind. There was an air of refinement in his bearing. His manners seemed perfectly natural, easy, and unaffected, without any attempt at posing. His conversation carried on in a low, gentle tone of voice, had a suggestion of reticence and reserve in it, but not enough to cause a suspicion of insincerity.[1]

In judging General Frémont's operations in the Virginia field it must not be overlooked that the armies were separate units controlled from Washington (by men who knew little about war), and often a general was compelled to

[1] *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz.* New York, 1907, vol. ii., p. 344.

move, or to halt, much against his inclination and judgment.[1] Besides, the equipment was miserable. Many of the men "were marching barefooted through mud and over rocky ground," according to Schurz. And he says that where a bridge one day required repairing, an axe had to be borrowed from a nearby farmer! Schurz sent back letters to Lincoln about these things; about the unfortunate reduction of regiments to 400 men; lack of knapsacks; clothing; shoes; poor horses; those of the artillery barely able to drag the pieces; and he ventured also, to suggest the necessity of more unity of command. It is plain that Frémont's position was not one to be envied; no more than that of any other general in the field.

The outcome of this situation was a concentration of all these commands, June 26, 1862, when Frémont's was placed under Major-General Pope as part of the newly created Army of Virginia. He requested to be relieved for the reason that Pope was his junior; the position being subordinate it "would reduce his rank and consideration in the service of his country." His request was complied with and here ended his military career as he was not again given a command. General Franz Sigel took his place. The other generals who were Pope's seniors were not as sensitive as Frémont—they had not been as prominent, and they pocketed their pride and remained on duty.

During this time the Mariposa interests had been neglected but, on the 10th of January, 1863, Frémont executed and delivered to Morris Ketchum and James W. Pryor, a mortgage upon six-eighths of the estate to secure the sum of $1,500,000. The other two-eighths were owned by Abia Selover and Frederick Billings who executed mortages to the same parties on the 24th of June of the same year,

[1] "Mr. Stanton, however, preferred to control the chessboard, by the light of unaided wisdom, and while McDowell was unnecessarily strengthened, both Banks and Frémont were dangerously weakened." Lieut.-Col. G. F. R. Henderson, in his *Stonewall Jackson*. London, 1898, vol. i., p. 360.

under an agreement that the mortgage was made to purchase the liens and encumbrances on the estate, and on the 25th of June, 1863, the Mariposa Company, organised under the laws of New York, became owner of a deed conveying the whole estate. Of course Mark Brumagim still really owned the Mariposa until Frémont, or his assigns, should redeem it, as previously agreed, by the payment of over $300,000 in gold. The price of gold, however, had risen enormously during the Rebellion, and in May, 1864, when the Mariposa Company was called on to meet the claim, $800,000 would have been required in currency. Brumagim then sold his lien, or title, to Cornelius K. Garrison. The story becomes more complicated in legal technicalities as the years advance, but the foregoing will give a sufficient impression of the unfortunate tangle, due to lack of capital, the see-sawing about title, and poor management.

The Mariposa Company defaulted on the payment and was later re-organised. With the subsequent operations Frémont had little or no connection. To add further to his troubles his cottage and lands at Black Point, together with other adjoining lands, were suddenly confiscated in 1863 by the United States for the erection of a fort. There was discovered a tendency on the part of France to recognise the Confederacy, and it was rumoured that she had designs on San Francisco in pursuance of this plan; hence the sudden need of fortification. Afterwards Frémont tried, for years, to secure re-imbursement for the property taken so unceremoniously from him, asking $50,000, a little more than he paid for it, but up to the time of his death, Congress ignored the demand and in fact, today stands convicted of having forcibly taken from a citzen real estate without compensation. On June 4, 1864, he resigned from the army. He was again nominated for President to oppose Lincoln's re-election, but the support was so small the movement was abandoned. In 1867 he was made president of the projected Memphis, El Paso, and Pacific Railway.

He went to live on the Hudson near Tarrytown. For some years the family enjoyed a happy life, the boys attending preparatory school for West Point and Annapolis, respectively; Francis eventually going through the first and Charles becoming a naval officer through the latter. The family went again to Paris, and when Frémont was obliged to return his wife accompanied him, but Miss Frémont remained in Dresden, till the Franco-Prussian war drove her home. She took the last passenger train out of Dresden.

Their next misfortune was the loss of the Hudson River home, "in a railroad panic," says Miss Frémont, her father then being concerned with the transcontinental railroad building. Owing to the failure of the railway scheme, many French investors lost their money and in 1873, Frémont was prosecuted by the French government and was sentenced on default to fine and imprisonment; but he was out of France. Once more they turned their steps towards the Golden Gate, and took up their residence on the Pacific Slope, now full of prosperous homes, rich ranches and fields, mines, mills, and everything pertaining to a civilised State.

In 1878, Frémont was appointed governor of Arizona, and in September, of that year, with his family, he left San Francisco for his post. At Los Angeles, en route, he was serenaded by citizens. From here they went by rail to Yuma, over the way he had formerly gone on horseback, and thence, there being no railway, in army ambulances to Prescott, which had a population of about 1800, and was an army post. Eventually the altitude, 5320 feet, was found to be too great for Mrs. Frémont and she was obliged to go to Tucson, 2376 feet. Two years later Frémont and his daughter also left Prescott for Tucson which was their home during the final year of his governorship.

Frémont and his wife went east, Frémont to buy arms for the territory with which to fight Apaches, and during their absence Miss Frémont had the experience of hearing the

explosion, like an earthquake, of an enormous powder magazine; of seeing a cloudburst; and of a severe illness with typhoid fever.

About the same time Morrell's storage warehouse in New York, where the Frémont household goods and treasures were stored, burned to the ground. The plates, which had been prepared for the volume of *Memoirs* that was to have been published in Philadelphia, were stored under the sidewalk and were therefore not injured, but nothing else was saved. They next went to Washington where Frémont wrote his *Memoirs*, the first (and only) volume of which was published in 1887. Then they lived for a time at Point Pleasant, New Jersey, where Frémont had a severe attack of pneumonia and finally was ordered to Los Angeles to recuperate, thus returning once more to the scenes of his earlier life. He arrived in Los Angeles, Christmas eve, 1887.

His friends soon began a movement to have him restored to the army, as a major-general, and in the autumn of 1889 he proceeded to New York in connection with this matter. He was in sore need of the income this would yield, and it is gratifying to note that Congress, in April, 1890, gave him this relief, "in view of the services to his country rendered by John C. Frémont, now of New York, as explorer, administrator, and soldier." While remaining to wind up his affairs so that he could permanently reside in California, he was seized with ptomaine poisoning, and after an illness of only five days, during which he was attended by Dr. William J. Morton, he died at 3:30 P.M., July 13, 1890, at the age of 77. Only the doctor and his son, Lieutenant John C. Frémont, were with him at the end. As the moment of dissolution approached the General spoke of leaving for home.

"Which home, General?" said the doctor.

"California, of course," the Pathfinder whispered as he passed "Across the Range," into the country unexplored "the ultimate end of his route," as Mrs. Frémont said.

It is a pleasure to record that Congress promptly voted

a pension of $2000 a year to the General's widow, hardly less of a general than he, and the women of Los Angeles presented her with a comfortable house, but her efforts to secure reimbursement for the seizure of the Black Point home were no more successful than her husband's had been, although many others who had suffered similar loss had been paid.

Frémont's remains were laid for a time in a Trinity vault, from which they were transferred to the receiving vault at Rockland Cemetery, Piermont, New York. The trustees of the cemetery on July 15th, two days after his death, voted a plot of ground, 20 x 35 feet, for the burial and a monument. The gift was accepted by Mrs. Frémont, and her son Charles selected the site, although the General himself had been many times to this place admiring the situation, from his home near Tarrytown immediately across the Hudson, in company with his friend William H. Whiton, one of the trustees. He had in fact chosen this spot as his last resting place, his final camp-ground; but had he died in California, it is probable he would have been buried there. Later the trustees voted to reserve a considerable area around this plot.

A number of propositions for monuments and burial in different places were set forth; the legislature of Wyoming voted a small reservation close to Frémont's Peak; a citizen gave a square in the town near its base; certain gentlemen of Kansas City talked of one at the mouth of the Kansas; and a California society, "Sons of the Golden West," tried to secure a site in Golden Gate Park, but failed. The "Associated Pioneers of the Territorial Days of California," a New York organisation of which Rear-Admiral Meade, U. S. N., was president, endeavoured to erect a monument at Piermont. Mrs. Frémont, long before, in California, had discovered a young sculptor and painter, Gutzon Borglum, whose great talent she immediately recognised, and as he had known and painted the General, she desired the monument to be designed by him. He made a model which was viewed by

the committee and photographs were taken for consideration. But the society, to Mrs. Frémont's disappointment, chose a design by another artist. For this and other reasons the monument matter dropped, and Mrs. Frémont requested that the final burial should be made without further delay; as she said: "In the open air for suns and snows to fall upon his grave as he so often unflinchingly met them in his life of toilsome duty done."

The final interment therefore took place the autumn of this request, November 22, 1894, a bright sunny day, when the Pioneers, with Admiral Meade, Major-General Miles, and many other distinguished men, were present at Piermont. Admiral Meade made the closing address, in which he remarked:

> We are here to honour the memory of the man who did as much as any man in his generation to give us the Empire of the Western World. . . . Of Frémont it can be said, every pulsation of his heart was for his country. If he had had his wish he would have died fighting for the colours he loved so well. His memory we revere. He was a pioneer in more senses than one. To him and his work is largely due the great party that brought about the freedom of millions of our countrymen in the United States.

Frémont was either very much liked or disliked; the latter attitude towards him was often the result of jealousy. The men who had been with him for weeks in situations uncomfortable, dangerous, disheartening, where men's real natures show forth transparent as crystal—men like Carson, Fitzpatrick, and Godey about whom there was no taint of affectation—esteemed him and admired him to the last. Captain Cathcart, the splendid British officer who suffered with him on the disastrous fourth expedition, sent him from London a beautiful sword as a mark of his continued regard. Everywhere Frémont commanded respect; whether at the

camp-fire of Sioux or Ute, or in the drawing-room of Washington, London, or Paris.[1]

His noble wife declared privately to a friend: "All National, American, and grandly unselfish, it was a life to honour," and this approval from one who, for half a century, knew him best of all, must stand supreme. In December, 1902, she, herself, took the mystic trail Across the Range, and her ashes (she was cremated, in Los Angeles, by her request) traversed the mundane road the Pathfinder so long before had marked out, and rest beside him on the heights at Piermont.[2]

General Frémont was buried, not in the uniform of his rank, but by his request, in the ordinary black clothes of a civilian; and, by his request, the coffin was a cheap pine box covered with black cloth, and his funeral was without military display. Whatever may have been his mistakes—some due perhaps to pride, some to a natural tendency to insubordination accompanying a high, sensitive spirit; none to viciousness—General Frémont remains to-day, one of the foremost, one of the most remarkable, Americans of his century. The Nation will honour itself by honouring him. His name is inseparably interwoven with the opening, and the development, of more than half the present area of the United States, and especially with the acquisition of California, and with the days of '49. His writings, and his deeds, stand at the top in the record of that vast region.

He profited little; his rewards were meagre; often they were only humiliation by powers with a sinister motive and through causes that should not have existed, and which were due to no fault of his, except perhaps to zeal and over-confidence. Sometimes he was made the "scapegoat,"

[1] *The Ninth Medal Issued by the Circle of Friends of the Medallion in Manhattan, December of 1913* was of John Charles Frémont. It is accompanied by prefatorial remarks by Charles de Kay, managing director, and by F. S. Dellenbaugh.

[2] John Charles, the second son, is also buried there.

TO COMMEMORATE THE SERVICES AND MARK THE GRAVE OF

JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

BORN, MAY 31, 1813. DIED, DECEMBER 27, 1902.

DIED IN NEW YORK, JULY 13, 1890.

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK
TO COMMEMORATE THE SERVICES AND MARK THE GRAVE OF

JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

MAJOR GENERAL U.S.A.

BORN, SAVANNAH, GA., JANUARY 21, 1813.
APPOINTED 2D LIEUTENANT
U.S. TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS, JULY 2, 1833.
BREVETTED CAPTAIN U.S.A., JULY 31, 1844,
"FOR GALLANT AND HIGHLY MERITORIOUS SERVICES IN TWO
EXPEDITIONS TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, THE FIRST OF WHICH
TERMINATED OCT. 17, 1842, THE SECOND BEYOND THOSE MOUNTAINS
TERMINATED JULY 31, 1844."
THEREAFTER WAS POPULARLY KNOWN AS

THE PATHFINDER.

ENGAGED IN THIRD EXPEDITION AND SURVEY WEST OF
THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO JULY 23, 1846.
APPOINTED LIEUT.-COLONEL U.S. MOUNTED RIFLES,
MAY 27, 1846; MAJOR COMMANDING CALIFORNIA BATTALION OF VOLUNTEERS
AND A PROVISIONAL BATTALION ORGANIZED BY HIMSELF,
JULY 23, TO OCT. 27, 1846.
APPOINTED SEPTEMBER 2, 1846,
MILITARY COMMANDANT OF CALIFORNIA
AND JANUARY 13, 1847, CONCLUDED ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION WHICH
TERMINATED THE WAR WITH MEXICO IN CALIFORNIA AND LEFT THAT
COUNTRY PERMANENTLY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE UNITED STATES.
APPOINTED CIVIL GOVERNOR
OF THE TERRITORY OF CALIFORNIA, JANUARY 16, 1847,
WHICH HE RELINQUISHED APRIL 19, 1847,
AND MARCH 15, 1848, RESIGNED FROM THE ARMY.
UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA
SEPT. 10, 1850, TO MARCH 4, 1851.
NOMINATED JUNE 19, 1856,
FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.
APPOINTED MAJOR GENERAL U.S.A., MAY 14, 1861,
AND JULY 26, 1861,
ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE WESTERN MILITARY DEPARTMENT.
RELINQUISHED COMMAND NOVEMBER 2, 1861.
ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE MOUNTAIN DEPARTMENT, MARCH 29, 1862.
RELIEVED JUNE 27, 1862,
AND ON JUNE 4, 1864, RESIGNED FROM THE ARMY.
GOVERNOR OF ARIZONA TERRITORY 1878 TO 1882.
BY ACT OF CONGRESS, APRIL 19, 1890,
"IN VIEW OF THE SERVICES TO HIS COUNTRY RENDERED BY
JOHN C. FRÉMONT, NOW OF NEW YORK,
AS EXPLORER, ADMINISTRATOR, AND SOLDIER,"
WAS APPOINTED MAJOR GENERAL U.S.A.,
AND RETIRED, APRIL 28, 1890.
DIED IN NEW YORK, JULY 13, 1890.

JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT—HIS WIFE
BORN, MAY 31, 1824. DIED, DECEMBER 27, 1902.

Monument to General Frémont
Piermont, New York, Rockland Cemetery
Erected 1906 by the State of New York
Photograph by F. S. Dellenbaugh, 1913

and the target, at one and the same moment, especially during the first rage of sectionalism born of slavery and the Civil War. More even than Lincoln, he received that first terrible onslaught of hatred and malice produced by the gathering storm—the whirlwind forerunning the tempest and warning the mariner to furl his sails. Staunchly he stood his ground never flinching in his call to halt slavery within its old bounds, or exterminate it altogether.

You who have followed his picturesque and interesting career, as recorded inadequately in these pages, ponder on it and tell us where it can be surpassed. Be not prejudiced by the false echoes of that desperate political encounter of 1856, nor yet by the recriminations incident to trying to organise an invading army out of raw materials with not even ordinary equipment at hand. Then say whether this extraordinary explorer, pathfinder, scientist, soldier, has received his full measure of honour. I think not.

In 1906, the State of New York, marked his sojourn within its bounds by erecting to his memory a monument at his grave at Piermont, a few feet back from the brink of the bluff, and five hundred feet above the great river, looking up and down the shining water of Tappan Zee; across to the tomb of Washington Irving; down into the mountains where, two hundred and thirty-seven years before Frémont named the Golden Gate to the Orient, to Far Cathay, Henry Hudson sailed up from the sea through the Entrance Gate to the Occident, and pointed the way. Take no small view of Frémont. He sizes up far beyond the average; and through all he was a gentleman.

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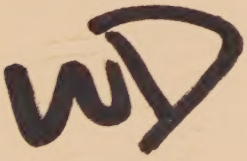
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